THE MISSION OF CHRIST

By the Rev. Canon R. B. GIRDLESTONE, M.A.

THE BUILDING UP OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

Cloth gilt, 5s. net.

"A dignified, reverent account of the Canonical books."—*Guardian.*

"Those who desire a clear and reverent presentation of the conservative case for the Old Testament will find it here."—*Homiletic Review.*

"There is a charm and force of appeal in the simplicity of style and devoutness of spirit in which the book is written . . . a welcome and worthy contribution to the study of the Old Testament."—*Churchman.*

"Both those who take the more conservative view, and those who are with the modern critic will do well to read the learned, persuasive and moderate statement in this deeply meditated and admirably written volume."—*Oxford Chronicle.*

"A very large circle of students of the Bible will welcome with grateful satisfaction a comprehensive treatise by Canon Girdlestone on the Old Testament. His name is honoured among them as one of the most learned of Hebrew scholars, and a veteran in the interpretation of Scripture . . . The volume appears to us to be at once the most comprehensive, the most candid, and the most Scriptural account of the Scriptures and their inspiration which has been made by a modern scholar."—*The Record.*

Mr. Harold M. Wiener, M.A., LL.B., says:—"The work shows wide general reading and a great store of general knowledge. It is written in a reverent and devout tone, the style is easy and pleasant to read, the point of view is fresh, and there are many ideas and facts not to be found elsewhere."

London: ROBERT SCOTT.

THE MISSION OF CHRIST AND THE TITLE DEEDS OF CHRISTIANITY

By

R. B. GIRDLESTONE, M.A

HON. CANON OF CHRIST CHURCH
FORMERLY PRINCIPAL OF WYCLIFFE HALL

Author of
"The Building up of the Old Testament," etc.

UNITED THEOLOGICAL
SEMINARY LIBRARY

BV
2073
.G524
1914

LONDON: ROBERT SCOTT
ROXBURGHE HOUSE
PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.

MCMXIV

All rights reserved

"Time is the Test of Truth."

Tertullian.

UNITED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY LIBRARY

PREFACE

THIS book is intended for students and workers. We are brought up in such an atmosphere of so-called "Christianity" that we are distracted by its manifold aspects. What is the Thing Itself? What is the centre, the spring, the aim? How did it begin, and how will it end? In trying to answer, we have to push out of our way endless by-products, traditions, conventions and observances, and make our way to Christ Himself—back to Him, up to Him and on to Him. We turn over the pages of the Four Memoirs, which are so vivid and graphic that we can almost hear His voice, see His face, and watch His ways; and the first thing we ask Him concerns His mission. He was evidently conscious of a mission from the beginning. When a boy He was engaged in His Father's affairs, in manhood He publicly stated that He came to give fullness and fulfilment to the law and the Prophets, to call sinners to repentance, to

21 '86

seek and save the lost, to give up His life a ransom for many. These and similar expressions were found in the first three Gospels, and they are reiterated and amplified in the Fourth, in which His attitude to the Father is emphasized. Out of the Father's love the Son gives His life that the believer in Him may be saved and have eternal life, and all that He did was done in accordance with the Father's will and in His name.

The Apostolic letters echo these truths. The mission of the Lord was redemption, saving, reconciling, quickening, enlightening, liberating, undoing the mischief wrought by the Adversary, and bringing men back to God.

We write and speak on this subject too easily; and we need to stand back and view the mission of Christ in its grandeur and simplicity; pondering afresh on the meaning of the word GOD, on His essential and eternal nature, which finds its expression not only in Creation but in Redemption; reckoning up His attributes in the light of the Living Word; considering the terrible and crying needs of human nature and the wonderful way in which the failure of the human race is dealt with and provided for by the grace which is in Christ Jesus.

In order to present this subject in a some-

what fresh light, I have tried to go back from the known and unknown, and from the present to the past; then to test the results attained by what we can see with our own eyes and realize in our own experience. In this way we are able to face the question, how far the mission of Christ is a success, and how far a failure, and to inquire whether there are any prospects of its becoming more of a success in the future than it has been in the past, and whether we ourselves can in any way further the cause for which Christ came into the world and gave Himself.

It would be endless to attempt a list of the books to which I owe a debt of gratitude for help received during the last half century. The cumbrous folios of old days have given way to the editions of the Abbé Migne and others, and the ante-Nicene series and other translations have rendered great service for the ordinary digger into antiquity. Each new attack on the age and authenticity of the sacred Books has drawn out such men as Westcott, Salmon and Lightfoot, Sanday, Zahn and Ramsay. Old libraries and tombs are giving forth such treasures as the Sinaitic Bible, the missing portion of Clement, the *Didaché*, the Apology of Aristides, the Syriac MSS. Thus

the materials both for the defence and for the exposition of the New Testament are steadily accumulating. Men are getting beneath the surface in their search after the truth enshrined in Scripture, and if sometimes in their eagerness to obtain the spirit they lose hold of the letter, and criticism is in danger of being substituted for Christianity, there is a reaction and an awakening to a sense of the grandeur of Him of Whom we read, that "the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world."

It has been well said that "a man is as bad a critic who rejects what is genuine as one who accepts what is spurious." It is acknowledged on all sides that the genuineness and authenticity of the sacred Books should be verified by the rules which are applied to other books of the same class and age, and the following pages are written on this understanding, but we have other testimony: we are dealing with spiritual books and with spiritual subjects, and Faith can put to her seal that God is true.

APPROXIMATE CENTRAL DATES OF WRITERS WHOSE WORKS ARE EXTANT OR REFERRED TO IN ANCIENT TIMES WHO USED BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

A.D.	
75–100	St. John, the last surviving Apostle.
100–125	* Tacitus refers to Christians, * Suetonius, Clement of Rome, Barnabas, the *Didaché*. Hermas, * Pliny's letter to Hadrian, * Marcus Aurelius.
125–150	Ignatius, Polycarp, Aristides, Papias, Letter to Diognetus, Muratorian Canon.
150–175	Quadratus, Polycrates, Basilides. Marcion, Tatian, Justin Martyr.
175–200	Irenæus, Heracleon, Theophilus of Antioch,
200–250	Melito, Ptolemæus, Minucius Felix. Hegesippus, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, Hippolytus, Apollinaris, Athenagoras, Paulinus.
250–300	* Celsus, Cyprian, Julius Africanus, Origen, Lactantius, Arnobius, Scillitan martyrs. Eusebius, Council of Nicæa.
300—325	The Sinaitic MS. of the Scriptures (now in Petersburg).

* Non-Christian references to Christianity.

N.B.—Students are not all agreed as to exact dates. I have generally followed Sanday's *Gospels in the Second Century*, but Bishop Lightfoot's *Essays on Supernatural Religion* are very instructive. Modern research would lead us to push some of these dates higher rather than to bring them lower.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

PAGE

THE NEW TESTAMENT TRACED BACK TO THE APOSTOLIC AGE 1

§ 1. Sources of Knowledge. § 2. Age of MSS. § 3. Versions and Quotations. § 4. What Non-Christians said of Christianity.

CHAPTER II

THE LETTERS AS A WHOLE 16

§ 1. Their Aim and Characteristics. § 2. The New Movement which they Imply. § 3. The Power of the Spirit. § 4. Salvation by Faith.

CHAPTER III

THE WRITERS 23

§ 1. St. James. § 2. St. Peter's First Letter. § 3. St. Peter's Second Letter, and St. Jude. § 4. St. John's Letters. § 5. St. Paul's Letters. § 6. Survey of the Teaching in the Letters. § 7. Note on the Epistle to the Hebrews.

CHAPTER IV

THE ACTS 40

§ 1. The Writer, § 2. Contents of the Book. § 3. The Preaching concerning Christ. § 4. The Effect of the Gospel on Life. § 5. Luke's Accuracy. § 6. Luke's Greek. § 7. The Relation of the Acts to the Letters.

PAGE

CHAPTER V

St. Luke's Gospel 64

§ 1. The Preface. § 2. The First Two Chapters. § 3. The Chronology of the Gospel. § 4. John's Preaching. § 5. Jesus comes on the Scene. § 6. The Temptation. § 7. The Ministry. § 8. Samples of His mighty Works. § 9. View of them as a Whole. § 10. The Lord's Teaching. § 11. The Kingdom of God. § 12. Figurative Language. § 13. The Parables. § 14. Circumstantial Teaching. § 15. Direct Teaching. § 16. Use of the Old Testament. § 17. Christ's Teaching Pre-Christian. § 18. His Claims. § 19. His Character. § 20. His Rejection. § 21. His Death and Resurrection.

CHAPTER VI

The Other Three Gospels 152

§ 1. St. Matthew. § 2. St. Mark. § 3. St. John. § 4. The Gospels as a Whole. § 5. Illustrated by Polycarp and Irenæus.

CHAPTER VII

Progression by Antagonism 173

§ 1. Early Criticisms and Persecutions. § 2. Modern Missions compared with Ancient. § 3. A Year of Church Missionary Work. § 4. Reasons for Failures. § 5. The Programme Incomplete. § 6. The Future of the Race. § 7. The True Test of the Mission of Christ.

CHAPTER VIII

Supplementary Notes on the Age and Authorship of the New Testament . 194

§ 1. Early Texts. § 2. Early Quotations. § 3. Early Heretics. § 4. Authorship and Authority.

THE MISSION OF CHRIST

I

THE NEW TESTAMENT TRACED BACK TO THE APOSTOLIC AGE

§ 1. Sources of Knowledge

BEFORE discussing the claim of Christ on our allegiance we have to ask ourselves what we really know about Him. Let us begin at the beginning. The sources of all our knowledge are primarily the senses: touch, sight, hearing—"that which we have seen and heard and which our hands have handled"—these convey the impressions of the outside world to us, that is, to our mind, our intelligence, our reason, our intuitions, our sense of right and wrong, our sympathies and antipathies, and our faculty for adoration, trust and prayer. Thus, the outside or not-self knocks at the gate of the self or *ego*, and is either welcomed or rejected.

Day by day this *ego* grows in experience as the beads of knowledge are strung on the thread of life. At any moment we *are* what we know, feel and do. No human being, however, is absolutely isolated. His parentage has stamped itself on his tendencies. He springs from a long line of ancestors; he has grown up amidst certain surroundings, and is a member of a family, a nation, a world. Moreover, he is gifted with a memory and with a keen faculty of imitation, and these are the keys of knowledge and of education. They are often dormant, but may readily be awakened through association. The fruit of memory is Tradition, which may be oral, in which case it is certainly not to be despised; or it may be perpetuated by signs, e.g., by writing—a process traceable back to hoary antiquity—and which includes all monuments of the past.

Writing seems to be almost primeval. Since the decipherment of the works of King Hamurabi, Abraham's contemporary, historical records are being pushed further and further back. In the Old Testament we have references to paper-reeds, styles, graving tools, ink, erasures, accounts, tablets, rolls, engravings or books. In the New Testament we find paper, parch-

ment, tablets, reed-pen, ink. The *biblos* or *liber* was the inner bark of the linden, while our *book* was originally *beech*. The *leaves* were columns, and afterwards became conventional *folios*.

From the days of Alexander the Great literature flourished at Alexandria. In connexion with the Library, which contained some 700,000 volumes, there were numerous offices for scribes and copyists. The Saracens destroyed the whole in A.D. 640. From the reign of Constantine till the fall of Constantinople that city was the great literary centre ; but the monastic orders did much to conserve literature. They inherited the art of calligraphy if not of tachygraphy. The names of the writers or their monastic homes are often found at the close of their works. There were also revisers to see that all was correct and legible. Papyrus gradually died out of use and cotton paper (*charta bombycina*) took its place, and was used both in the East and the West. Curzon, in his visits to the Levant (1833, etc.), found stores of vellum MSS., some of which were used as hassocks and as covers for jam-pots. Egypt gave up its stores to Drs. Tattam and Cureton, and is still yielding its treasures to the expert.

See on this whole subject *The History of the*

Transmission of Ancient Books, by Isaac Taylor (sen.), also *Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts*, by F. G. Kenyon.

We are thus introduced to the subject of Literature, historical, archæological, psychological, philosophical and practical. This includes the Christian Documents with which we are now concerned. They are many-sided and far-reaching in their interest. We want to know above all things if they are true. Are they dealing with realities? or are they works of imagination? or do they present us with a superstructure of error built up on a basis of truth? We must not block all such inquiries by saying that the Books are inspired, but we must study them with earnestness and patience, comparing Book with Book, collating text with text, questioning them so as to determine their age, their writers, their object, their spirit and their accuracy in the light of history and archæology, and also their early reception and influence. Then we shall be in a position to recognize the hand of the God of Truth in their composition, and to acknowledge them as God-breathed.

§ 2. Age of Manuscripts

Our first business is to trace the original

documents on which Christianity depends as far back as possible; that is, to inquire how nearly they bring us to the events which they record or imply.

I have before me an English New Testament (Revised Version) of 1881, also a reprint of Tyndale's English New Testament of 1525, also Erasmus' edition of the Greek Testament of 1516, the first Greek Testament ever published, from which Tyndale made his translation. All copies of the Greek Testament made before that date were written by hand. These manuscripts are to be found in various Museums and other Libraries, and we are compelled to avail ourselves of the authority of experts if we wish to ascertain their approximate dates. We may safely say, however, that we can see with our own eyes, in the British Museum, a copy of the Greek Testament which was written between A.D. 350 and 450, whilst there are copies in the Vatican and Petersburg libraries which are older still. Where are the manuscripts from which these ancient documents were copied? Are they still lurking in some secret hiding-places? Or have they perished through natural decay or by the hand of the adversary? At any rate, experts tell us that the venerable MSS. which we can now see are

copies of copies, as can be discovered by the nature of their variations, and that we must go a long way further back to discover the first attempts to inscribe all the title-deeds of the Christian Faith on one roll. Before that time each Book of the New Testament must have been written separately, and subsequently they must have been written in groups. These processes involve much time, and take us back to the cradle of Christianity, the First Century A.D.

§ 3. Versions and Quotations

Meanwhile, we have to remember that we are not restricted to this one line of inquiry. The early Christians did not all speak Greek, and they thought and felt in their mother tongue. The Translator began his work in very ancient days. Who can venture to give the date of the first Syrian or Aramaic version of the sacred Books, or of the first Latin version for use in North Africa? Where are the originals from which Jerome made his immortal Vulgate? From what sources were the Ethiopic, Armenian, Georgian, Gothic and Sclavonic Gospels translated?

Again, who drew up the first list of Apostolic Books to be read in churches? It must have

been the work of time for the various Communities to give and receive, until at last all Churches had all the Books, and the unknown ancient scribe could write his list or canon of the Sacred Books which is preserved in the Ambrosian Library of Milan, and called after the name of Muratori. Further, what has befallen the copies on which Origen based his commentaries? and where are the original Four Gospels which were compounded into one consecutive narrative in the second century and called the Diatessaron? Above all, where are those which were read in public in the churches before A.D. 150, as plainly stated by Justin Martyr in his Apology or Defence of Christianity? All these inquiries —and many more might be made—drive the inquirer back into the first century, and bring us face to face with the age from which Christianity springs.

Every new literary discovery bearing on the subject deepens the conviction that the Books which the Christian of to-day holds as authoritative were regarded in the same way by those who lived in the generation after the death of the original Apostles or Missionaries of Christ. The earliest post-Apostolic Christian writers used them as we use them to-day. Such men as Clement of Rome, Ignatius and

the other "Apostolic Fathers" whose writings have come down to us may not have been great philosophers, but they knew Whom they believed, and were ready to lay down their lives for their faith. Aristides, whose Apology has lately been brought to light, is described by its editor as "more of a child than a philosopher." The same is true of others. They were children, and yet they were men. They bore abuse, hard names, mockery, stripes, imprisonment, and death itself, fortified by what they read or were taught from the Gospels or the Letters. They lived in faith and love, and died in hope.

On surveying the Christian literature of the Second and Third Centuries, we find that we have works or fragments of works composed by some seventy writers who lived before any of our known MSS. were written. So far as we can judge, they all used our Christian Scriptures. They hailed from Assyria in the East to France in the West. From all points of the compass and from all parts of the Roman Empire they had entered the Kingdom of Christ. Some had been Jews, some Gentiles, and some had inherited Christianity from their fathers. Their writings were sermons, treatises, defences, letters, discussions. They cover the

whole chronological ground from the beginning of the Fourth Century back to the end of the First. They quote loosely; they had no Concordances or "Helps," or neat little Testaments with marginal references; but they had excellent memories, and they loved the writings to which they owed so much.[1] In R. Haldane's Memoir it is stated that a gentleman at a literary party asked how far the contents of the New Testament could be recovered from the writings of the first Three Centuries. Lord Hailes (Sir David Dalrymple) determined to search into the matter. After two months, he said to Dr. Buchanan: "I have been busy searching for chapters, half chapters and sentences, and have marked down what I have found and where I found it; and I have discovered the whole New Testament except seven or eleven verses, which satisfies me that I could discover them also." Thus, "The Word" was hidden both in men's hearts and in their writings.

It should be added that the New Testament was already regarded as inspired and as combined with the Old in the days of Tertullian, "the law and Prophets being mixed with the writings of the evangelists and apostles, from which the Church drinks in her faith" (*Prescr. hær.* 36).

[1] For a further discussion of this subject, see chap. viii.

So says Theophilus, who describes the Prophets and Gospels as all inspired by one Spirit of God (*Autol.* 12). Similarly Origen (*de princip.* 3, 3), "The Scriptures alone were inspired by the Holy Spirit, i.e., the Gospels and Epistles and the law and the Prophets."

§ 4. What non-Christians said of Christianity

But it may be said, the writers referred to were all Christians; what did non-Christians say of Christ and Christianity? It is true that the Early Fathers were Christians when they wrote; but they were by no means all born in the Faith. Thus, the two African Rhetoricians, Arnobius and Lactantius, came out of heathenism; so it was with Tatian the Assyrian, Cyprian of Carthage, and many others. These men came out of darkness into light; they were walking evidences to the power of Christ's Truth; and though we have not a hundredth part of what they wrote, we have enough to give us insight into the change they had undergone.

We can hardly expect the classical writers of that age to have read the letters of Peter and Paul and John. Did they even acquaint

themselves with the sacred literature of the Jews? Did they study the Septuagint? Their ideas, both about Judaism and Christianity, and even about Palestine, were very vague and often quite mistaken.[1] Still, they knew that Christ had lived and died, and they have left important references to the early days of Christianity, which, however, they dismissed as a superstition and denounced as hostile to the best interests of mankind.

The most important of all the Roman historians was TACITUS. In his *Annals* (xv. 44), in giving an account of the Fire at Rome, which took place shortly after Paul's arrival as a prisoner, he says that Nero laid the guilt of it on a set of people who were held in abhorrence for their crimes, and who were called Christians,

[1] Augustine, in his *City of God* (vi. 11) refers to Seneca, the brother-in-law of Gallio, as having criticized the Jews for losing through idleness a seventh part of their time, but says that "he dared not mention Christians who were already most hostile to the Jews, lest if he should praise them he should do so against the ancient custom of his country, and perhaps if he should blame them he should do so against his own will." He further quotes Seneca as saying that "the customs of that most accursed nation have gained such strength that they have been received in all lands, the conquered having given laws to the conquerors!" Thus Seneca mixed up Jews with Christians; but he died in *c.* A.D. 65.

the Founder being Christ,[1] who suffered death in the reign of Tiberius under his Procurator, Pontius Pilate. This pernicious superstition (he continues), which was thus checked for a while, broke out again and spread, not only over Judea, where the evil originated, but through Rome also. He proceeds to give an account of the horrible sufferings inflicted on Christians by Nero, and adds that this conduct made the sufferers to be pitied because they were considered as sacrificed, not so much out of regard to the public good, as to gratify the cruelty of one man.

SUETONIUS, another notable writer, in his Life of Nero (chap. 16), when referring to these events, speaks of Christians as men of a new and mischievous superstition; and in his Life of Claudius (chap. 25) says that the emperor banished the Jews from Rome, and adds that they were continually raising disturbances under the leadership of Christ. It is thought that both MARTIAL (*Ep.* x. 25) and JUVENAL (*Sat.* i. 155) refer to the horrors of those times, and this is the more likely because of the reference in EPICTETUS (iv. 7), who asks if it is possible for

[1] He spells the name *Chrestos*. Tertullian (*Apol.* 32 and *Ad Nationes* 4) refers to this mis-spelling, and points to its meaning as "kind" instead of "anointed."

a man to become indifferent to sufferings, either from madness or from habit, as in the case of the *Galileans*.

The younger PLINY was a friend of Tacitus. Half a century after Peter's First Letter to the Christians in N.E. Asia Minor, Pliny found himself in charge of the Province of Pontus and Bithynia. In his 96th Letter to the Emperor TRAJAN he writes to inquire about the Christians and what he is to do with them; whether all, young and old, were to be punished, even though not ordinary criminals. Many had been executed by his orders simply because they were Christians; some held out; others succumbed and worshipped the image of the Emperor and the statues of the gods. He proceeds to give an account of their worship, and relates how he had tortured two of their deaconesses, and mentions that the "superstition" had spread through cities, villages and country places. The Emperor replied that Christians must not be sought after, but if they were brought up by a person of repute, and were convicted, they must be punished.

This was the age of Ignatius of Antioch, who was thrown to the lions in A.D. 116, and whose Letters have come down to us. Trajan was succeeded by HADRIAN (A.D. 117), who

ordered Fundanus, the Proconsul of Asia, that if Christians were guilty they should be legally brought to trial (Euseb. *H.E.* iv. 9).

ANTONINUS PIUS, who succeeded (A.D. 138), and to whom Justin Martyr addressed his first Defence, apparently refers to the last-named Emperor's rescript (Eus. iv. 13).

We thus reach the celebrated LUCIAN of Syria, who flourished about A.D. 175, and who freely caricatures Christ and Christianity, referring to Christ as the great man who was crucified in Palestine (see especially his *de Morte Peregrini*, 11–13). At the same time CELSUS was attacking Christians and citing some eighty passages from the New Testament in order to criticize them. As Dr. Doddridge once said, "An abridgment of the history of Christ may be found in Celsus." He seems to have used all the Four Gospels. His books have perished, but his views can be reproduced from Origen's replies to them.

MARCUS AURELIUS (A.D. 161–180) in his "*Meditations*" (xi. 3) refers to the obstinacy of the Christians; and GALEN, who was his contemporary, alludes to "the School of Moses or Christ" as one whence we must receive laws without any reason being assigned (see his work on the difference of pulses).

Edicts against Christians followed in quick succession, and Christianity was subsequently attacked by PORPHYRY and HIEROCLES, and in still later days by JULIAN, the apostate. Meanwhile, the celebrated but unfortunate LONGINUS, the rhetorician, has left a fragment in which he testifies to the eloquence of St. Paul, though this has been questioned.

The passages thus cited from non-Christian writers of authority show decisively that Christianity was making its mark in the Roman Empire in the very century in which it originated, and that if its progress was to be stopped it must be by physical force. This was attempted, notably by the Emperors Decius and Diocletian, but it failed.

II

THE LETTERS

§ 1. Their Aim and Characteristics

WE now take into our hands a collection of Letters which have come down to us from the First Century of our era. They are written in Greek and are twenty-one in number, and they are the work of at least five writers. Some are written to Communities, others to individuals. Two, the Epistle to the Hebrews and the first Epistle of St. John, are anonymous, and are more like treatises than letters. All have an official and authoritative air about them, but there is no "officialism" in the modern sense. They are strong, intense, fervent in spirit, awakening, arousing, encouraging, warning, convicting, appealing alike to conscience and common sense. They are practical rather than speculative or philosophical, written by men who knew not only *what* they believed but *Whom* they believed. To say that

their aim is distinctly religious is not enough. They have to do with a great spiritual Movement in which the writers claim to be Pioneers.

Judging from the contents of these letters the Movement had lately spread through Asia Minor and Greece, and had reached Rome. Jerusalem (which was not yet destroyed) appears to be its headquarters, and the Jewish people are primarily interested in it, but Hellenist, barbarian, and governing race of Rome are included in its scope. The writers are manifestly Jewish—taking that word in its less restricted sense as including members of all the Tribes of Israel, but they have emerged from the swathing bands of Judaism, and have come under a new Personal influence. They are still to a large extent Jewish in thought, though they write in Greek, and the more we absorb the Israelitism of the Old Testament and the Judaism of the Christian era, the better we can appreciate their standpoint. There is nothing like them. Seneca, Pliny, Cicero and the other letter-writers of the age pale before them. The Christians who came afterwards and who were imbued with their spirit, Clement of Rome and the rest, lack the force, the originality and the authority of these Pioneers. The letters of Dionysius, Bishop of Corinth, referred to by

Eusebius, would be valuable for comparison if extant.

§ 2. The New Movement which they Imply

Taking the Letters as a whole, we find that the various writers are in harmony as to their teaching concerning God. They have inherited the Theology of the Old Testament, but it has been re-minted. The Divine Being is now spoken of, not as the God of Abraham, Isaac or Jacob, but as the God and Father of a particular Personage Who had figured in history during the lifetime of the writers, but Who had passed away from earth some five-and-twenty years ago.

This Personage was a member of the Tribe of Judah and of the House of David. He was "sent from God" in a special sense, though born of a woman and under the Jewish Law. He came to bring "Salvation," not to the Jew only, but to the world. Through Him the lost were to be found, the degraded were to be ennobled, the sin-stained were to be cleansed. Those who believed in His mission entered into a new life. They were renewed, re-created, re-born, changed, transformed, transfigured; they passed from death unto life, from bondage to liberty; they were washed, sanctified,

acquitted, pardoned, and made heirs of God's Kingdom. They had been darkness; now they are light. They had been fleshly minded; now they are spiritually minded. They had been fools, unjust, hateful, and hating one another; now they are wise, philanthropic, righteous. They had pursued the shadow; now they have got the substance. At best they had sought their own righteousness under the (Mosaic) law; now they attain the righteousness of God as an act of grace, and live it out. The letter has given way to the spirit, enmity to reconciliation, defeat to victory, the seen to the unseen, the temporary to the permanent.

Such are some of the contrasts by means of which the great change is expressed. It was indeed Good News or Gospel for the morally ruined.

§ 3. The Power of the Spirit

The new life is also represented by a number of analogies which show that it is both continuous and active. There is the walk (frequently described in the English Bible as "conversation," i.e. turning to and fro); there is the race, the wrestling-match, the hand-to-hand fight, the building up or edifying, the

stewardship or right use of gifts put at one's disposal; and men have to watch against busy enemies within and without, including false teachers, open persecutors, secret powers of evil.

It is evident that men's energies are drawn out to the utmost by the new beliefs; but alongside of all this teaching there is something else which forms an essential part of the Good News. It is the in-working of a Power higher than our own. It is like oxygen breathed into an invalid, or electricity infused into one whose forces are stagnant, or fire acting on chilled blood, or a powerful hand lifting up and helping forward one who can hardly face the battle of life, or a friendly voice penetrating the heart of one who is beginning to sink. Who or what is it? Sometimes it is described as grace, i.e. a free, undeserved gift of God; sometimes as the Spirit of God coming into touch with our spirit; sometimes it is "Christ in us."

It is through the inspiration thus attained that the recipient enters upon a new life and becomes a new man, a new creation. It is through Christ that all things are changed. The Christian's religious duties are summed up in one thing—it is imitation of Christ, and so of God; it is the expression of what God

has impressed through the manifested life of His Son ; it is devotion of oneself to Him Who has devoted Himself to the interests of man. Together with this there is a strong spirit of Hope, not of a vague, sentimental kind nor of a doubtful description: it has to do with the coming of the King and Master, Whose work is by no means complete yet, and Who will render to every man according to his labour.

§ 4. Salvation by Faith

As we review these elementary ideas which lie at the root of the Letters, there begins to dawn upon us the fullness of the meaning of "Salvation," which had been the watchword of Israel from the time of the Exodus. In one sense it has to do with the past, in another sense it has to be worked out in our daily life, but in a third sense it has to be revealed in "the last time."

We see, too, something about Faith, which consists both in receptivity and activity, the message of God in Christ being taken as true, attended to, yielded to, and acted upon. We get, also, a new or more full revelation of the nature, character and working of God Himself. His holiness, faithfulness and saving love, which were manifested through long ages in the

history of Israel, are now brought home to the world at large in a Personal life and death and resurrection, which are made real to the believer by a divine spiritual agency. Through this agency man is gifted with acting power, resisting power, continuing power, and what has been called the expulsive power of a new affection, which extricates from materialism and from the degradation of fleshly desires, and makes man a partaker of the divine nature and an inheritor of eternal life.

III

THE WRITERS

§ 1. St. James's Letter

TURNING from the consideration of the Letters as a whole to the characteristic features of the special writers, it is natural to begin with the short, imperative Letter of James, who simply describes himself as a bond-servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a circular letter to the Twelve Tribes, i.e. to those of them who held the new faith and had been impressed by "the Word of Truth." They were a Brotherhood; they loved the Lord; and they were to love their neighbour as themselves. Accordingly, they were called to manifest their convictions by speech and action. As heirs of a Kingdom they were to obey the laws of the King, and to be guided by the Scriptures of the Old Testament; also they were to be men of instant, persevering prayer. The age was a difficult one, an age of persecution and of judgment, and their business was not

to criticize sinners, but to convert them. In this fresh brief letter Christianity is presupposed but not expounded. The discourse begins and ends abruptly. It is thoroughly business-like and yet "prophetic," and it has to be read with Judæo-Christian eyes. Students are generally agreed that it is early. There is nothing "Pauline" about it, still less is it anti-Pauline, e.g. on the subject of faith and works. It has much in common with Peter's first Letter, especially in its use of passages from the Old Testament. Its illustrations are fresh and forcible and almost—though not quite—parabolic.

§ 2. St. Peter's First Letter

Peter writes with the authority of an elder, a witness and an apostle (i.e. a missionary). He addresses himself in the main to the scattered Christian Israelites of Asia Minor, to whom the letter of James had probably already found its way, and who come to the front a little later in Pliny's celebrated letter to the Emperor Trajan (see p. 13).

He exhorts the Christians to whom he writes to exercise a spirit of meekness, patience, loving-kindness, faithfulness, joyfulness and hope. What James calls "the Word of Truth which is able to save men's lives," Peter calls "the

Word of God," the Gospel, which is the spring of regeneration and new life. The Christian is to walk in the steps of his Master, whose living, suffering, submission, crucifixion and rising are to be woven into everyday life, whether in the family or in public, or under the adverse circumstances of persecution. The whole "conversation" or course of life was to be inspired by the Spirit of the Master. All were to be buoyed up by the certainty that the Judge of quick and dead would give a true award on the Great Day. James spoke of the crown of life; Peter, of the crown of glory. Certainly, the ideal set before the Christian was a high one—as we speedily find out when we try to live up to it. The flesh is to be crucified, the devil is to be resisted, the law of holy love is to be followed.

But if the letter is full of Duty, it is also full of Him Who is set forth throughout as the spring of the new life. We see Him in the hands of sinful men, led as a sheep to the slaughter in accordance with the terms of the 53rd of Isaiah. He is the spotless, sinless Lamb of God, Whose bloodshedding is appealed to as the ground of redemption. The sprinkling of that blood on the heart and conscience was what every Jewish Christian would understand

as the personal application of the Master's sacrifice of Himself to the sin-stained conscience.

The readers of this Letter sorely needed it. The sword of the Persecutor was hanging over them. Their gold was to be tried in the fire.

§ 3. St. Peter's Second Letter, and St. Jude's Letter

With regard to Peter's second Letter, some differences of style have stood in the way of its acceptance as from Peter's hand, but it stands as a book of great practical value. It emphasizes knowledge as the key to power, and gives a remarkable chain of excellencies, each growing out of the preceding one, which are to be aimed at by every believer. The Christian is to be eager, not slack. If obstacles are in the way of his advance he is to put forth more of the grace which God has put within his reach. The relationship between this letter and that of Jude is recognized by all students, but who can account for it? If we had lived in those days we should have understood these two Letters more clearly than we do now. They were written in evil days.

§ 4. St. John's Letters

When we pass from the Letters of James and Peter to those of John we feel that we are

in a different atmosphere. The writer does not name himself, but he is called "the Presbyter" in the second and third Letter. He writes with authority as an eyewitness, and occasionally with severity as a son of Thunder. It is observable that he alone among the letter-writers never supports his utterances by formal quotations of the Old Testament. There are certain key-words to his thoughts, e.g. Life, Truth, Love, Fellowship, Sonship, which receive new force from his utterances. Moreover, he provides those for whom he writes with various tests whereby they may know whether they are really what they profess to be; thus, Do they love the brethren? Are they consistent in the matter of sin? How *can* they be sinning if they are born of God? It is noticeable that this "birth," which answers to James's and Peter's "conception" and "regeneration through the Word," is referred to no less than ten times in this short Letter. John has one Person in his mind throughout. He brings before us a sinless sin-bearer Who had come in the flesh from God, the effect of Whose bloodshedding or sacrifice of Himself is to ensure pardon and cleansing from on high. The writer being manifestly a Judæo-Christian and a Pioneer, uses the word Propitiation as marking the

Divine acceptance of the work of the Son in behalf of the whole world.

John is very practical and goes to the root of things. He recognizes, as James does in his Letter, the antagonism between the spirit of the world and the Spirit of the Lord, and he discerns the coming conflict between the Master and the anti-Christian Spirit which was already working. He writes as an old man, warning, encouraging, affirming and reaffirming (as Moses did in his Deuteronomic utterances). He holds that God reproduces His own nature in the Christian, and that the ideal of the believer's life is to walk as the Master walked. He dwells much on the teaching, the anointing by the Spirit, and the future appearing of his Lord, and emphasizes the absolute truth of the Gospel message which was gathered up in the fact (with which he was personally conversant) that the Father had sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.

The Second Letter of John is short but exceedingly forcible. False teaching was in the air, and the remedy for it was to abide strictly in the doctrine of Christ.

The Third Letter has to do with discipline rather than with doctrine. It is the shortest and, perhaps, the strongest of all.

The Apocalypse has been pondered over from the beginning of Christian history. It is not discussed in the present volume; but attention may be called to Sir William Ramsay's treatise on the Letters to the Seven Churches with which this stirring series of visions opens. He takes the Book to be written by St. John in the age of Domitian (A.D. 96), which is the old view.

§ 5. St. Paul's Letters

The Letters which we have been considering are short and to the point. They have the great advantage of being the work—so far as we can judge—of the original followers of the Master. The fourteen remaining Letters are to be regarded as the work of a man who was a violent opponent of the New Movement until a change suddenly came over him, from which time he became not only an enthusiastic adherent but a devoted missionary. His Letters are not only more numerous, but more forcible, more argumentative, and richer in personal touches than all the rest put together.

Although Paul was not an original disciple and never so much as uses the word "disciple," he had many compensations. He united considerable learning with intense emotional force,

and he had a history. The Rock at which he had stumbled became his Foundation. His righteousness, of which he had been so proud, had become worse than rubbish in his eyes. The strong contrasts referred to above (see p. 18) were mainly parts of his personal experience.

We can usually detect the occasion or circumstances under which each of his Letters was called forth. It might be to remove difficulties, to answer inquiries, to expound truth, to promote progress, or to pour out a heart's love. Some were Pastoral; one was private and personal. Some were written in heat; others in cool deliberation.

We note as we read Paul's Letters his high standard of piety. There is no *maximum* and *minimum*. Every Christian was to aim at perfection, and it was to be attained through the energizing power of the indwelling Spirit. He was gifted with deep knowledge of human nature, its weaknesses and possibilities, and with excellent common sense, as we see in his solution of practical questions concerning marriage, food and money matters. But while broad-minded and considerate, he was intensely loyal to his convictions. He was courteous towards all and desirous to see the best in all,

but he was not a man to heal a disease slightly. His confidence was not in the Communities to which he wrote, nor in himself, but in his Master and his Message. He wrote as a man under authority, and there was to be no appeal from his decision. He has the Old Testament at his fingers' ends. Also, he illustrates freely from everyday life ; thus in three consecutive verses he draws lessons from the soldier, the wrestler, and the labourer (2 Tim. ii. 4–6). His rhetoric, his superlatives, his antitheses, his questions, his use of the climax, and, above all, his appeals to his own experiences of sin and grace—all are turned to account in the Master's service. So much for the writer, but what of the Communities to which he wrote and who were located in Asia Minor, Greece and Rome? Sometimes he idealizes them, taking them on their profession into which they were baptized, as saints or holy, elect or chosen, shrines or temples of the Spirit of God, dead to sin and living to Christ, seated in heavenly places in Him. At other times he calls on them to become in reality what they were by profession, and he warns them against the subtle temptation involved in the atmosphere of corruption, materialism, self-righteousness and false philosophy with which they were surrounded. One thing he

always kept before their minds: God was faithful; the Master—unseen but ever near—would not lightly let them go; nothing could separate them from His love; the Lord's strength was made perfect in their weakness; the Righteous Judge had a crown of righteousness for the loyal, whether Jew or Gentile, free or slave, men, women or children.

§ 6. Survey of the Teaching in the Letters

As we read these Letters, taken in conjunction with the others, we can picture up a series of little Communities, usually Jewish in their nucleus but non-Jewish in their fulness, mixing freely with their neighbours for the purposes of ordinary life, but abstaining from every custom, rite or festival which would involve disloyalty to their Master or offence to their brethren. Their beliefs were one; their modes of worship, their initiatory rite, their memorial feast, their thoughts of God, their recognition of one another as Brothers, whether Jews, proselytes or non-proselytes, their spirit of patience, forbearance, meekness and fortitude under persecution, their joyfulness, thankfulness, prayerfulness, hopefulness, and, above all, their absolute devotion to One Whom most of them—perhaps all of them—had never seen, but to

Whose claims upon their trust and love they had yielded—these were the marks of the Christian, so far as we can gather them from the letters of the Pioneer Missionaries among whom Paul was pre-eminent.

Truly, there must have been a cause for the existence of this novel and extraordinary phenomenon. Who can have been the Originator of the Movement? Was He Philosopher? Politician? social Reformer? ethical Teacher? a Socrates? a Buddha? a Confucius? or was he a special Messenger and Manifestation from Him in Whom we all live and move and have our being, revealed at a particular stage in man's history and under special conditions which are to a large extent Jewish, though world-wide in scope and far-reaching in operation? The more deeply we study these Letters, the more clear it becomes that we have brought before us a unique Personality, God's own Son (Rom. viii. 3), God's own special Son (Rom. viii. 32), God's only Son (1 John iv. 9), sent forth by a loving Father (1 John iv. 9, 10, 14), Who did not spare Him but gave Him up for man (Rom. viii. 32). In accordance with the Father's will He suffered intensely in the flesh during the crisis which culminated on the Cross, bearing what came upon Him in a spirit of

meek submission, knowing that He was fulfilling a programme set forth in the Old Testament. He suffered on the Tree, the Righteous One in behalf of the unrighteous (1 Pet. iii. 18), that He might bring men near to God, that their connexion with sin might be cut off, and that they might live to righteousness (1 Pet. ii. 24). On the Cross He was a sin-bearer and a curse-bearer (Gal. iii. 13 ; 1 John iii. 5) while Himself absolutely sinless (2 Cor. v. 19–21 ; 1 Pet. i. 19). According to these Letters, the crucifixion of the Lord was not a mere martyrdom in the modern sense. It was the undoing of a great evil wrought through the enemy of mankind (1 John iii. 8). It was not a human attempt to pacify an offended God, but it was "God in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them" (2 Cor. v. 19). This was no imaginary story of Jewish heroism. The deed was actually done, and crucifixion was followed by death. The living sacrifice was complete in the act of dying. Then followed burial ; then resurrection (1 Cor. xv. 1, etc.) and ascension (Eph. iv. 9).

It is noteworthy that the Letters contain several references to the true meaning of the death of the Master in connexion with the word "*blood*." To every Jew this would be

understood as life-blood, and as the life-blood of a victim, and the attentive reader of the Letters would perceive that the Victim in this case was not the lower dying unwittingly in behalf of the higher, as in the case of animal sacrifices, but that it was the higher—in fact, the highest conceivable—giving up His life deliberately, submissively, lovingly, in the interests of man. "He loved me," says Paul, "and gave Himself up for me."

The blood-*shedding* is followed by blood-*sprinkling* (1 Pet. i. 2; Heb. x. 22; xii. 24), which every Jew would understand as the application of the benefit of the Lord's death to the individual conscience, whilst its personal appropriation would be expressed more clearly by the word "*drinking*" (1 Cor. xi. 25, etc.; compare Heb. vi. 7). In connexion with this view of the Blood, we find in the Letters reference to remission, redemption, justification, sanctification, and union, both of God with man and of Jew with Gentile. (See 1 Pet. i. 2; Heb. ix. 4; x. 18–22; 1 John i. 7; Eph. ii. 13–16; v. 25; Rom. iii. 24, 26; v. 9). Thus the four leading letter-writers are at one in their teaching on this great subject. Paul and John speak of Propitiation and the Mercy-seat; Paul and Peter on access or free approach and

on the living sacrifice; Peter and John and Paul on the claim which the Lord has thus established on the hearts and lives of those who attend to the things which are spoken.

Every Jewish student of the sacrificial system of the Old Testament knew that the essence of an offering was that it should be voluntary and out of a pure heart, and that it should be precious to the offerer and acceptable to the Person to whom it is offered. If it was in behalf of a third party, that party has to identify himself with it by the personal act of faith which was exhibited by the old rite of laying on of hands, and it must commend itself to the sin-stricken and sin-stained conscience which thus attains joy and peace in believing. According to the Letters, the rising of the Master from the dead in a glorified body gave the positive assurance which was needed and proclaimed the divine acceptance of the Son's offering of Himself in behalf of the world. In this sense He rose again for our justification, and it was "according to the Scriptures," i.e. the Old Testament (Rom. iv. 25; 1 Cor. xv. 4). There are some forty references to this important event in the Letters.

We proceed to question these precious original documents on another subject:—Where is the Master now? And is there anything further

to be looked for? What prospects are there before the individual believer? and before the Community of Christians at large? The answer is: He is in the heavens, in the spirit-region whence He came. There He is in touch with every believing soul, sympathizing, succouring, quickening, enlightening and satisfying the thirsty soul with the Water of Life. His presence and action and love are practically identical with those of the Spirit of the Living God, and His mission is being carried out in the hearts and lives of His loyal followers.

So it will be till "the Day of the Lord." We see not yet all things put under His feet. Ages have passed since the Letters were written, and the high hopes expressed in them are not yet realized. The stream of human life runs on with its nationalities, its dynasties, its civilizations, its destructive wars, its clouds of error and its gleams of truth. What would the Pioneers say if they were to visit the earth now? Surely they would bid us keep on doing the work which they began, knowing that our "work is not in vain in the Lord" (*see* 1 Cor. xv. 58).

§ 7. Note on the Epistle to the Hebrews

This is not so much a letter as a treatise. It was quoted as a work of authority as far back

as A.D. 95 by Clement of Rome (*Ep.*, § 36), and was regarded as the work of Paul by several early writers, though others attributed it to Barnabas. It stands towards the other Epistles as John's Gospel stands to the other Gospels. It is forcible, original, highly argumentative, expository and constructive. If we put ourselves into the position of early Judæo-Christians who found themselves ecclesiastical outcasts from their old Community and exposed to many persecutions, we can see what a help and encouragement this treatise would be. It sets forth the truth concerning the Lord Jesus as Son of God in His original nature and Son of Man in His assumed nature, as higher than any heavenly angel and more exalted than any earthly lawgiver or priest. The nature, extent and completeness of His sacrifice for sin is expounded. The New Covenant is contrasted with the Old. The many-sided aspects of faith are freely illustrated. The remarkable rites of the Great Day of Atonement are dwelt upon as illustrations of the free access to God granted through Christ. The sympathy, sinlessness and eternal sameness of the true King of Righteousness is held forth as an encouragement to every Christian to hold fast against the deceitfulness of sin and the violence of persecution.

Have we in this treatise an illustration of Paul's method of arguing in the Jewish Synagogue? Perhaps it is so to some extent; and the use of the Old Testament in the Acts and in Romans ix.–xi. should be compared with that which we find in this Epistle. Still, the line of argument seems to be different, and the style different also, so that perhaps it is wisest to use this precious addition to the letters with the respect and attention which it manifestly deserves, without attempting to decide who was its actual writer. It was evidently written by a person of authority and, primarily, to a well-known Community; it affirms the claim of Christ on their devotion and obedience, and reminds them that in acknowledging Him they had gained far more than they had lost and that they had begun to learn the full and true meaning of their Old Testament Scriptures.

IV

THE ACTS

§ 1. The Writer

THE Letters, precious as they are, raise a number of questions and leave much to be desired. We want to know more of the Missionaries themselves, and more of the Communities to whom they wrote and of the spiritual atmosphere which pervaded them. We want to give to the Letters and their writers their proper place in history, and to understand their attitude to Jewish and Gentile authorities. For this purpose we turn again to the Christian Library, and discover in it one Book which answers our purpose and which is familiarly known as the Acts of the Apostles, though it might well be called the Mission of the Holy Ghost. It is evidently the second volume of a work of which the first volume will have to be examined later on. It contains a simple narrative of the beginnings and spread of the Great Movement which the Letters portray. In the

early part of this work Peter comes to the front, and in the latter part, Paul. Whoever the writer was—and we see no reason for departing from the ancient belief that it was Luke, the Physician of Troas—he claims to be a sympathetic historian who had cast in his lot with Paul, who sometimes writes in the first person plural, and who had collected ample and trustworthy materials for his record. This claim has been fully verified of late years by Sir William Ramsay, owing to the fact that the Book abounds in references to persons, places, officials, political boundaries, customs, etc., the accuracy of which has been tested afresh by this author by reference to other works, e.g. the writings of Josephus and those of the Roman literary authorities of the age, together with inscriptions and objects brought to light by the archæologist and explorer.

§ 2. Contents of the Book

It is perhaps curious that Luke never refers to the Letters which we have been discussing and which were manifestly of the same age as the events which he records. This perhaps adds weight to the fact that his narrative unwittingly fits in with the indications of date and circumstance to be found in the Letters,

especially in the case of Paul. It is to be added that he only gives a selection of events, with an outline of some notable addresses of a missionary character, and that his object is evidently to provide a trustworthy sketch of the rise and spread of Christianity in the Roman Empire.

Having this object in view, Luke begins with the last farewell of the Founder of the New Movement, describes the great spiritual awakening which followed at Jerusalem, with its attendant phenomena, and gives an outline of Peter's first public discourse. In this address some notable prophetic utterances of the Old Testament are put alongside of certain historical facts about one Jesus of Nazareth, Whose character, work and condemnation to the cross were matters of public knowledge, but whose resurrection, ascension and claim to be the promised King of Israel were now first openly announced, being confirmed by spiritual manifestations before their eyes.

In the following chapters we see the Christian Community in the making, and the spirit of Brotherhood being infused into it. Opposition soon arises, and this leads to violent persecution, which culminates in the stoning of Stephen—a man of courage, wisdom, faith and love. Then comes the mission of Saul to Damascus

to stamp out the New Movement before it made further head.

It is strange to realize that in those early days the New Teaching had got so far as to this ancient capital of Syria, but we must remember that on the very first day of the preaching, i.e. the Day of Pentecost, there were present at Jerusalem Jews and proselytes from as far East as Parthia and Elam, from the whole of Asia Minor, from North Africa, from Rome, and from the Mediterranean islands. These people, when they returned to their homes, would carry with them the welcome news that God had fulfilled His promise, and that the King had come; but that He had gone and would come again. There was indeed one stumbling-block in the way of the acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah, which will have to be considered further on.

The conversion of Saul, the most zealous emissary of Pharisaic Judaism, to the new views was a critical moment in the history of Christianity. For the time opposition was paralysed and the Communities in Judea, Galilee and Samaria had rest and were built up (Acts ix. 31). After a few years Saul—or, to give him his Roman name, Paul—emerges from his privacy in Tarsus, makes the great city of Syrian Antioch his headquarters, and starts forth on a mission

to the West. Wherever he finds a Jewish Synagogue, there he proclaims the new Truth. Wherever he is rejected by the Jew, there he turns to the Gentile. When driven out of one place he makes for another. Asia Minor provides him with plenty of open doors for his first journey; but in his second he crossed into Macedonia and down through Philippi, Salonica, Berea and Athens, to Corinth. What a vivid sketch of this novel missionary undertaking Luke gives us!

After his first journey, Paul and Barnabas, his companion, held a great missionary meeting at Antioch, and subsequently went to Jerusalem to plead for the liberty of Gentile believers in the matter of Circumcision. After his second journey he went up and saluted the Church (at Jerusalem) for a special reason, and then again went to Antioch. In course of time he started on his third journey (Acts xviii. 23), going by an inland route—doubtless *viâ* Tarsus, as he had done in his second, revisiting the Communities, strengthening them in their faith, and giving them further instructions in matters of life, doctrine and discipline. In this way he reached Ephesus and worked round by Macedonia to Corinth, as before, back the same way, and so to Cæsarea and Jerusalem. In the

ordinary course of things he would have gone from Jerusalem to Antioch; but this was not to be. He is seized by his inveterate enemies, the Pharisaic Jews, handed over to the Romans (as his Master had been), sent from Jerusalem to Cæsarea, and thence, after two years, he embarks as a prisoner for Rome, having availed himself of his right of appeal as a Roman citizen. It seemed, however, as if he was never to get there; but God was faithful to His promise. The graphic description of the shipwreck (Acts xxvii.) and the final arrival at Rome closes the narrative.

It may be added that Paul's two years in this city take us from about A.D. 60 to 62; shortly afterwards came the Great Fire of Rome and the terrible persecution of Christians by Nero; and three years later the destructive fire at the end of the Siege of Jerusalem, and the treading down of the city and the people.

§ 3. The Preaching Concerning Christ

Certainly, this book of Acts opens a new page in human history. The thirty years which it embraces were a thirty years' war against Jewish Sadduceeism and Pharisaism, and against Gentile superstition, ignorance and materialism.

Human nature was seen in a new light. Men, women and children were evidently more precious in the sight of God than some had supposed. Priests, high priests, rulers of the Temple, elders and councillors of Israel, consuls, procurators, kings, governors, trembled before One higher than themselves, Whose ambassadors were simple Jews. But these Jews had a message: it is called "the Word of the Lord"; it has to do with Jesus, Who is called by the official name of "Christ," the Anointed, which every Jew would associate with the Hebrew "Messiah," and stood for the promised King. Gentiles did not understand this at first, and sometimes mis-spelt the word as if it stood for the Greek *Chrestos*, i.e. kind-hearted. This Christ is referred to by other titles. He is the Son, the Holy Child or Servant of God, the Prince, the Leader or Author of life and salvation, Who is destined to judge the world in righteousness at the appointed time.

The preaching concerning Him was largely historical, but where the audience was Jewish it was also scriptural and expository. It was by no means conventional in style. The Master's ambassadors were always ready. They frequently had not a moment for preparation, but spoke without nervousness out of a well-

stored mind and out of kindled feelings; and they knew that their Master was with them. In almost every place where Paul visited he found a body of Jews and made straight for the Synagogue. Here he announced the good news that God had redeemed His people. But when he got as far as the Crucifixion-story they naturally stumbled. Why should the Messiah be crucified? In vain he rapidly passed on to the Resurrection and to other important topics. Some, indeed, believed, but some believed not. From these last came opposition; consequently, Paul turned to the Gentiles. In so doing he was both falling in with a vein of teaching which runs through the Old Testament and was also obeying the direct orders of His Master, Whose missionary call might be summed up in one sentence, "I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles." Paul's appeal to the Gentiles was largely directed to their reason and conscience. It was whilst he was speaking of righteousness, self-control and the coming judgment, that Felix trembled; and the text of all his addresses was "Repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ."

There was also more advanced instruction for those who were already Christians. It may be illustrated by the address to the Ephesian elders

(Acts xx.), and with this may be compared the Letter to the Ephesians (*see* p. 62).

§ 4. Effects of the Gospel on Life

All the preaching had its social side. Believers became Brotherhoods and Christian Communities. They were to look after one another's interests, and were taught that it was a happier thing to give than to take. At the same time, they were to be "saints" and to have no fellowship with the evils with which they were surrounded. They were under the dominion of one Master, Christ, Whose subjects and servants they were and to Whom they were bound by intense devotion, for had He not bought them to Himself at the cost of His self-sacrifice? This allegiance carried with it the gift and the indwelling energy of the Spirit of Holy Love, whereby they were fused into one Body, of which the ascended Lord was the Head. Thus, while the Gospel message reached their ear, the Spirit touched their heart, and Christ was brought home to them as their living, loving and coming Friend and Saviour.

Their creeds were fresh and hardly formulated; their organization and liturgies were only beginning to crystallize, having been naturally based on Jewish models. Though spiritual

rather than political in their constitution, they had to walk in wisdom towards outsiders, and to give honour where honour was due. Their Communities were threaded together internally by a common faith, hope and love, and externally by subordination to the missionaries who had been the means of their conversion—in other words, to the preaching, teaching and Letters which reached them from headquarters, and last, but not least, to the enlightening influence of the indwelling Spirit and to the messages of truth contained in the Old Testament. The Lord Jesus was to be their Master and their Model; consequently, wherever they were located throughout the world, they must have been anxious to know all they could about His earthly life, so that they might follow in His steps. Hence the special value of the Books which make up the New Testament.

We gather from the Acts, as from the Epistles, that when men became Christians they were by no means immune from risk of error. This is clearly brought out in the 20th of the Acts, where Paul tells the elders of Ephesus that grievous wolves would enter in among them, not sparing the flock; also that from among themselves some would arise who would seek to pervert them. What provision could a mis-

sionary make against this prospect? He could not remain with the Christians in one definite locality for the rest of his life. He could only urge them to be watchful and mindful of all he had taught them, whilst he commended them in prayer to God and to the Word of His grace.

How far the scattered Communities were to be governed from Jerusalem in matters of doctrine and discipline is not clear from the Acts. On certain questions decrees were formulated and were obeyed (Acts xv.), but what would happen after Jerusalem had fallen and the original missionaries had died? The answer can be more readily drawn from the Letters than from the Acts. These Letters established precedents by which all Communities were to be guided.

The Jews were already scattered through the Roman world. They had their synagogues, their discipline, their worship, their traditions, their relationship with headquarters at Jerusalem, and, above all, they had their Scriptures. The more we study the subject, the more we are impressed with this providential preparation for the coming of the Messiah, and with the vigour and tenacity of the Jewish faith, and that in spite of its division into two parties, represented by Pharisaism and Sadduceeism. The

missionaries who came to tell them about the New Movement were primarily, if not wholly, men of their own race and creed, who often began their addresses with a bird's-eye view of God's purpose as set forth in the Old Testament. They were men who saw visions, men of a prophetic character, men who subordinated their own interests to their message, men who wrought signs and did mighty works to confirm their words, and who were at times delivered from the power of their opponents through the manifest protection of God. They claimed to speak with authority and to be acting under the guidance and power of the Holy Ghost.

In their views and methods of work they were not always of one mind. Peter was subjected to criticism by the Christians of the Circumcision party (Acts xi. 2), but when he fully stated his case, they acknowledged that he was right; in fact, his own prejudices had been forcibly overcome by the influence of the Spirit's action. Paul and Barnabas saw things differently in the case of John Mark, and there was a "paroxysm" between them which led to a temporary separation, the wisdom of which we can readily appreciate. Paul's movements were generally decided by the voice of the Spirit within him, but sometimes he departed from his

original intention, as when he was about to go by sea to Syria, but owing to something he heard he made up his mind to go overland (Acts xx. 3).

Paul was a man who loved the companionship of personal friends who were drawn to him in the course of his missionary visits, and who clung to him ; see, e.g., Acts xx. 4, where we find in his company a Berean, two men of Salonica, one from Derbe, one from Lystra, and two from Ephesus. We should like to hear a little more about the intercourse and occupations of these seven men. They were like a little bodyguard in his last journey to Jerusalem, and may have had a share in the preaching whilst under his instruction, having a delegated authority, in some cases, notably in that of Timothy.

In the course of the Christian mission it was evidently not easy to avoid political difficulties, and Peter had his troubles both with the Sanhedrim and with Herod. Paul was constantly coming into conflict with the authorities whilst in pursuit of his duty, e.g., at Philippi, and at Salonica, where the Jews accused him of opposing Cæsar and saying that "there is another King, one Jesus" (Acts xvii. 7). The difficulty became more acute in later days at Jerusalem and Cæsarea.

§ 5. Luke's Accuracy

Luke seldom obtrudes himself upon the reader's notice. In certain places he speaks in the first person plural, being one who had attached himself personally to Paul—perhaps originally at Troas, or possibly much earlier at Antioch—and cast in his lot with him in the journey to Rome. Although probably not a Jew by race, he may have had a Jewish mother. At any rate, he had become acclimatized to Judaism and uses Jewish expressions, and it was apparently no trouble to him to translate one of Paul's Hebrew speeches into Greek (Acts xxii.). He was a whole-hearted adherent to the Christian faith, as he shows by various expressions. His story of the shipwreck has naturally attracted much attention in later days and has been subjected to the most rigorous examination by the late Mr. James Smith, of Jordan Hill. It proves to be a narrative which combines accuracy of nautical detail with traces of medical knowledge. He is also equally observant throughout the volume with regard to official titles. It is this accuracy which enables us to trust Luke as a historian of the very first class, whilst his candour and fairness towards all contending parties, Jewish and Christian, is noteworthy. Probably he was more a recorder

than a preacher or theologian. Whilst in the latter part of the narrative he was to some extent a personal witness giving his own account of what he knew, he must have depended on others for the details and addresses contained in the first half of the Book. From whom, for example, did he obtain the outlines of Peter's addresses in chapters i., ii. and x.? Whether we take them as only notes, that is, as containing the substance of what was said rather than a *verbatim* record, still, they and the surrounding narrative claim to be accurate and to give what every Christian needed—an instructive account of the beginnings of Christian history. Much is left out, years are passed over, the hardships of travel are lightly touched upon, and we know next to nothing of the history and work of the majority of the original missionaries, but we have enough—a few incidents simply but carefully narrated, evidently on the authority of original witnesses. This, it may be mentioned in passing, was the plan on which the Old Testament histories were prepared. We shall see, when we look at the Preface to Luke's first volume, that he claims to have full knowledge of his subject, and so far as we can test him we find him trustworthy.

Fortunately, his narrative can be verified so

far as its external history is concerned. Let us look at this a little more closely. The Book contains some seventy-five proper names. A good many of these are names of Christian missionaries and private persons whom we could not expect to find referred to elsewhere except in Christian documents, such as the Letters. Many of Paul's companions referred to in the Acts are named—sometimes almost casually—in Paul's Letters, for example, Barnabas, Mark, Luke, Priscilla, Aquila, Timothy, Jason, Sosipater (Sopater), Gaius, Erastus, Sosthenes, Apollos, Crispus, Silas (Silvanus), Peter (Cephas), James the Lord's brother, John, Tychicus, Aristarchus, Trophimus. Of these twenty names the only one not mentioned in the Acts is Luke himself, but it is reasonable to add this. Of course there are many other names of Christians referred to in the Letters which are not to be found in Acts, and *vice versa*.

A second group of names includes those of Jewish priests and Roman rulers. They include Annas, Caiaphas, John, Alexander, Ananias, Gamaliel, Herod Antipas (Tetrarch), Herod Agrippa I and II, Drusilla, Bernice; also the Roman Emperor Claudius, and various governors (often with technical titles), including Pontius Pilate, Sergius Paulus, Gallio, Felix,

Festus, to whom we may add Queen Candace. All these have their place in secular literature, and when we examine the circumstances under which these personages appear, and what we know of them from other sources, we are driven to the conclusion that the Acts is a historical work of the highest order.

The same test may be applied to the places named in the Book. First, we have Jerusalem and its surroundings, the Mount of Olives, the Temple, the Beautiful Gate, Solomon's Porch, Aceldama (known elsewhere as the Potter's Field, where a bed of white clay has been found). These are not dotted down at haphazard. Everything concerning the *Hieron*, or sacred court, the *naos*, or Temple, and the Castle where the Roman guard was garrisoned, is in its place. Going further afield, we find Gaza, Ashdod (Azotus), Lydda, Sharon, Joppa, Cæsarea, Damascus, Antioch, Seleucia, Cyprus (including Salamis and Paphos), Perga, Antioch in Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe, Troas, Samothrace, Neapolis, Philippi (with the reference to the dyer of Thyatira, which was a Macedonian colony), Amphipolis, Apollonia, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, Corinth, Ephesus, with a number of technical official words bearing on the cult of Diana, all of which have been veri-

fied of late; and, finally, the long list of names of islands and places connected with Paul's final journey to Jerusalem and on to Rome. Not only the names of the places have to be considered, but their relative distances, the roads by which some of them could be reached, and the incidents by the way. Compare, e.g., the incident at Lystra with the lately discovered fragmentary inscription referring to Zeus and Hermes in that region; note the official titles of the Thessalonian and Cyprian rulers found on inscribed stones.

We now reach the narrative of the shipwreck already referred to. We owe a great debt to the late Mr. James Smith, of Jordan Hill, for his work on this subject (Longman, 1848), both for his researches into the text of Acts xxvii., his inquiries concerning ancient and modern shipping and navigation, and, above all, for the freshness and fairness of his discussions. He has left nothing unexamined. He pursues the voyage from Cæsarea, describing the harbours, winds, currents, difficulties and delays; comparing the experiences of others throughout, dealing with the nautical words and correcting, where necessary, the Authorized Version. At length he reaches the crisis; the drifting is over, the time taken being verified by modern

seamen; the soundings, the anchoring, the saving of the whole company follow. Luke, whilst a professional in medical matters, is accurate but unprofessional as a seaman, and gives results rather than processes, saying little about the sufferings which the crew must have endured while fighting for dear life.

It should be added that Sir W. Ramsay has examined afresh with an unprejudiced eye the whole of Luke's narrative in the light of history and archæology, and gives his verdict in favour of the absolute accuracy of the author of the Book.

§ 6. Luke's Greek

There is another very important test to which a historical work of such an intricate character can be subjected, and that is language. The question constantly rises as we study the speeches in the Acts—In what language were they originally uttered? Some were evidently in Hebrew, i.e., in the current Hebrew language of the day, now called Aramean. Others were in Greek, especially where a large foreign or Proselyte element was present, or where the missionary was before the Roman authorities. The language of the Book, as we have it, is wholly Greek, as is the case with the other

Books of the New Testament, but occasionally it betrays a Jewish or Hebrew origin. Thus, no Gentile would speak of a sabbath day's journey (Acts i. 12). The duplication of a verb to give emphasis in chapters iv. 17, v. 28, vii. 34 and xxiii. 14, looks Hebrew. The references to the days of unleavened bread (xii. 3), the Passover (xii. 4), the keeping or "doing" of the Feast (xviii. 21), the Fast (xxvii. 9)—all without any explanation—indicate a Jewish point of view in the writer, whilst the note on Aceldama (i. 19) goes the other way, as it refers to *their* dialect, as if it was not the writer's.

Every student of the Greek Testament will discover a long list of Greek words in Acts which are only used in this Book or in St. Luke's Gospel. There are at least seventy such words. Many of these are compounds, for which the writer evidently had a strong affection, and which mark a Greek rather than a Hebrew origin; but the list also includes a number of peculiar scientific or medical words, such as those rendered "feet and ancle bones" (iii. 7), also "scales" (ix. 18), "skin" (xii. 12), "dysentery" (xxviii. 8), and many others. These certainly fall in with the very ancient belief that Luke was the beloved physician of Col. iv. 14.

§ 7. Relation of the Acts to the Letters

Two other things may be referred to briefly.

A century has passed since Dr. Paley wrote his *Horæ Paulinæ*. He shows therein that the indications of dates which lie beneath the surface in Paul's Letters, and which are often quite casually referred to, are found to be undesignedly timed in harmony with the narrative in the Acts. Thus two independent sets of documents throw light on each other and attest each other's veracity.

The Acts, however, not only gives us an outline of history, but also supplies us with the substance of some of the missionary addresses of Peter and Paul. They are not at all like imaginary speeches. They are condensed, original, powerful. Peter's first public address, in the 3rd of Acts, is practical and business-like. In it he compares the Scriptures with certain events which were fresh in the memory, and drives men to a decision. His addresses in chapters iii. and iv. are on the same lines. The discourse in the house of Cornelius (Acts x.) is necessarily of a different character, and does not contain a single quotation from the Old Testament. Peter himself refers to it at a later period in the history (xv. 7). Then we

have two Letters, claiming to be written by Peter, of which the first is the most notable. On comparing this Letter with the speeches, we inquire whether the teaching is of the same character. In each we find that God is no respecter of persons (Acts x. 34, 1 Pet. i. 17); that He is the Judge of quick and dead (Acts x. 42, 1 Pet. iv. 3); that He is the purifier of the unclean (Acts xv. 9, 1 Pet. i. 22); that the mission of Christ and His sufferings were part of God's predetermined counsel (Acts iv. 23, 1 Pet. i. 20) and were set forth by the prophets (Acts iv. 3, 1 Pet. i. 10, 11); that the word of the Gospel of Christ was witnessed by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven (Acts ii. 33, 1 Pet. i. 12); that the Tree, that is, the Crucifixion, was an essential element in the mission of Christ (Acts v. 30, x. 39, 1 Pet. ii. 24); that the result is Salvation (Acts ii. 21, 1 Pet. i. 9, 10), received by faith (Acts. iii. 16, 1 Pet. i. 21); and that Christ was the stone rejected but glorified (Acts iv. 11, 1 Pet. ii. 4).

It may be added that John joined Peter in the affirmation that they must speak what they had seen and heard (Acts iv. 20; compare 1 John i. 1).

A comparison of Paul's speech to the elders of Ephesus with his Letter to the Ephesians

is also instructive. Note the call to humbleness of mind (Acts xx. 19 and Eph. iv. 2), the building up (v. 32 and Eph. ii. 20, iv. 12), the inheritance (v. 32 and Eph. i. 16, 14, 18 and v. 5), the blood (v. 28 and Eph. i. 17, ii. 13), the remedy for error (v. 32 and Eph. iv. 14), the call to prayer (v. 36 and Eph. i. 16, iii. 16, vi. 18), and lastly, the interesting reference to working with the hands (v. 34 and Eph. iv. 28). Let any one attentively read the notes of the address and the warnings it contains, and then read this Letter as a whole, and observe the spiritual prescriptions which it offers, and let him draw his own conclusion as to the undesigned relationship between the Acts and the Letter.

To what do these observations tend? Manifestly, they lead to the conviction that the writer of the Acts is a historian of the highest authority, that he is not a blind partizan, that he was guided and inspired by the Spirit of Truth. If we had the Letters without the Acts, we should be at our wit's end for clear information as to the origin of the New Movement and as to the circumstances under which the Christian Communities were formed. On the other hand, if we had the Acts but not the Letters, we should look in vain for the practical results of the missions and for the inner life

of the Christians. We should want to know, for example, what it was which made believers so exceedingly glad, what it was that prompted them to share their goods with one another, what led them to associate belief that Jesus was the Messiah with the doctrine of forgiveness of sins, how it was that the most bigoted monotheists in the world could bring the name of the Messiah to the front in their spiritual life, attributing to Him functions, judicial and otherwise, which they had been taught to ascribe to the One God. Beyond all these there was the great perplexity which the Acts never solves, that the Messiah Who came to reign had been rejected and crucified at the instigation of the religious leaders of the day, that this was part of the Divine programme, that it was done in ignorance, and that it was overruled so as to produce a world-wide offer of pardon and a world-wide claim of spiritual sovereignty, and that thus, while Israel as a nation still had its hope, the world as a whole was to be judged in righteousness by the Man whom God had raised from the dead.

V

ST. LUKE'S GOSPEL

WE now go back to the first volume of Luke's work. We enter upon it with the conviction that the historical principles which manifestly guided the writer in the Second volume will have animated him in the First. We shall expect the same language, the same method of narrative and selection, the same trustworthiness, the same spirit of Truth—in fact, an accurate and unvarnished narrative of things which had actually taken place.

§ 1. St. Luke's Preface

The Prefatory Note calls for careful study (Luke i. 1–4).

It is addressed to "the most excellent" Theophilus, a title applied to Felix and Festus in the Acts, and answering to our "His Excellency." There is no reason to doubt that Theophilus was a real person of high position, though he may have been publicly known by

another—probably a Latin—name. Luke's object in writing was that Theophilus might clearly know the absolute certainty of the words, i.e. the narratives, about which he had been already instructed (*lit.*, catechized). This last word is used in the Acts and by St. Paul for persistent teaching, and indicates the wakening up of an echo in the person taught. Theophilus was thus a disciple, or at least a catechumen, and Luke desired to assure him of the truth of what he had been taught. The two men must evidently have been known to one another, and Theophilus must have had a high opinion of the writer. But what were Luke's qualifications for the task? Although, as we have seen, he played a part in Paul's missionary career and had finally accompanied him to Rome, he did not profess to have been an eyewitness of the events he is now about to record, though they all occurred, doubtless, in his lifetime.

First of all, he says that these events were "fully believed" in the Christian Community. We have no good English word answering to the Greek word thus rendered. It is used in the Letters of a full persuasion or assurance. It implies that there was not a shadow of doubt in the minds of the believers. Doubt would have paralysed their life.

Secondly, these events had been committed to the believers, including the writer, by original eyewitnesses. The word "original" (*lit.*, from the beginning) is that used in the first verse of John's Letter, where he claims to have been one of these witnesses, and appeals to the three senses, the ear, the eye and the touch, as combining in producing conviction of the truth.

Thirdly, Luke speaks in the plural number, both as to the believers and as to the witnesses. The Gospel is not handed down by one person, but by several.

Fourthly, he affirms that these eyewitnesses became "ministers of the word." The term translated "minister" is an official one, and applies to anyone holding rank as an officer, whether civil or religious, but the addition of the expression "of the word" clearly marks the sense in which Luke uses it, and we may compare with it Paul's words (1 Cor. iv. 1), "Let a man regard us as officers or ministers of Christ and stewards of the secrets of God." See also its use in John xviii. 36 and Acts xiii. 5.

Having thus characterized the persons to whom he and his fellow-Christians owed their first knowledge of the Truth, Luke proceeds to speak of himself, and says that he had followed down the whole course of events from

the beginning—an expression which might be illustrated by the work of an explorer in following down the course of a river from its fountain head.

Consequently, it seemed good to him to write, for he had the necessary qualifications. The word here translated, "it seemed good," is used no less than four times in Acts xv. (*vv.* 22, 25, 28, 34). It stands for a decision, and is the origin of the word *dogma*. It may be a human decision or a divine one, for it is applied to the Holy Spirit in one of these verses; and so here we may fairly recognize the working of the Spirit of God at the back of Luke's mind, giving him all needful power and inspiring him with a sense of responsibility to the God of History, Who is the God of Truth.

There is yet one word to be considered. It is translated "in order." It might almost be rendered "systematically." Compare its use in Acts xviii. 23, where Paul is described as taking the Phrygian and Galatian Communities "in order," i.e., in such order as seemed best to him. We gather from its use that Luke's narrative is orderly, and that he saw a reason for the order in which the numerous events it contains are given, the grouping being sometimes chronological, sometimes topographical, and sometimes arranged by the subjects.

At any rate (to use Luke's own expressions in opening his second volume) he guarantees a historical and systematic record of the doings and teachings of Jesus up to the time or day when He was taken up (i.e., to heaven).

He does not profess to tell everything. There are many gaps which we can illustrate by analogous gaps in the Acts, as, for example, in Acts ix. 19, where a visit to the desert has to be interjected in the middle of the verse. There may be very few notes of time, as in the Acts, but those which Luke gives need careful attention. There also may be few marks of consecutive order. The little word "then" (τότε), which is so freely used in the English Authorized Version, does not occur once in the narrative of historical events in Luke's Gospel, though it is used some fifty times in this sense by Matthew. Luke's favourite phrase is, "And it came to pass," or, "Now, it came to pass." These expressions occur some forty times, while Matthew uses them only seven times. It is important to notice this, as it sets us free to rearrange Luke's order in the light of other Gospels if it should prove necessary. Still, he had his reason for putting events and teachings in the order in which we find them.

There is yet one other point referred to in

Luke's Preface ; it has to do with the " sources " from which he draws his information. In writing the Acts he must frequently have made inquiries, and must have satisfied himself as to the correctness of what he was about to write ; but he never refers to his authorities. So it must have been, in the case of his first volume, the Gospel. His knowledge was mainly drawn from the testimony of authoritative eye-witnesses, as we have seen, but he does not name them. No one imagines that he had the Fourth Gospel (St. John) before him ; but had he the First ? or the Second ? and if so, were they in the language and form in which we have them now ? If they were both already current, what need was there that Luke should write a Third ? This has been a fruitful subject of inquiry, especially during the last century, in Germany and in England, though questions bearing on it are as old as the early ages of Christianity.

We have to remember that a similar question has arisen about the relation of the Book of Chronicles to that of Kings. When the Hebrew text of certain chapters in these Books was collated, it was practically demonstrated that the writer of Chronicles had a work very much answering to our Book of Kings before him,

and that he made free use of it, adding, omitting and altering on some principle of his own.[1] Luke may therefore claim the Chronicles as a precedent if he did the same. Certainly, there were already in existence some written materials. Many had undertaken the task of setting forth an orderly narrative, though some may have failed (compare Acts ix. 29 and xix. 13, where alone the word for "undertake," or "take in hand," is used, and where failure was stamped on both efforts).

The Preface may thus be recapitulated :—

i. Certain things were most surely believed by Christians.

ii. They had been committed to believers by eyewitnesses and persons in authority.

iii. Many had undertaken to write a careful account of them.

iv. The present writer takes the matter in hand for the benefit of Theophilus, that this personage might know the absolute accuracy of the things in which he had been instructed.

v. The writer's qualifications made it fitting that he should undertake this task,

[1] See *Deuterographs*, by the present author, published by the Oxford University Press.

for he had followed down the course of events from the beginning.

§ 2. The First Two Chapters

St. Luke here records a series of remarkable events which are in many ways linked up with the Old Testament, and which lead on to the great manifestation of the Gospel of Christ. We accept them as historical on the responsibility of the writer. They are thoroughly Jewish and must have been obtained from Jewish sources. We are in the days of Herod, the King of Judea, and in company with a priest. His name is Zechariah, his priestly course Abijah, his wife Elizabeth, his character righteous and blameless. The pair are aged, and they are childless. In his simple narrative many things arrest our attention. Who was Herod? We have good reason to know that it was Herod the Great, the clever, heartless schemer of whom Josephus tells us so much. What was the course of Abijah? This is settled for us in 1 Chronicles xxiv. 10. Abijah was the head of the eighth of the twenty-four Courses into which the sons of Aaron were divided in the days of David.

Was it strange to find the name Zechariah among the descendants of Abijah? By no

means. In one of the last chapters of the Old Testament (Neh. xii. 17) we find Zichri (i.e., Zecariah) named as a leading descendant of Abijah.

This aged man has at last got his turn, which usually came only once in a lifetime, to exercise his priestly office. He enters the sacred edifice and ignites the prescribed compound on the altar of incense with a coal—a piece of red-hot charcoal—taken from the altar of burnt-offering, which was in the outside court.

There appears to him an angel of the Lord. To such a godly man and to such a student of the Scriptures this would be a solemn, if not an alarming, sight, especially as the angel was close by his right hand. Then comes the comforting message that the petition which Zechariah must have made again and again in his earlier days had been listened to. He was to have a son, who was to be called John (Johanan, the grace of the Lord). This son would grow up to be a great man, filled with the Spirit from his birth, and appointed to do work answering to that of Elijah, and so to fulfil one or two remarkable utterances of the Prophets. His work was to be preparatory for that of the Lord Himself. Zechariah raises a question which was natural but not permissible. The

dignified answer follows: "I am Gabriel." The name would instantly remind the old man of an earlier appearance of this heavenly being in human form (Dan. viii. 16), and of the strange events with which that event was connected. The sign of dumbness immediately follows as a sign that Gabriel's words should be fulfilled in their season.

The narrator here breaks away to introduce a far more important event. If the birth of John was a marvellous thing, after all, it was only preparatory, and what shall be said of the birth of the Lord Jesus? If the motherhood of Elizabeth may be illustrated by that of Sarah, where shall we find a precedent for the motherhood of Mary? It takes us back to the first pages of our Bible and to the origin of mankind, though the students of natural history may find an illustration of it in *parthenogenesis*. It is like a new beginning to the human race. The Child to be born should be "Man of the substance of his mother, born in the world," and yet not man of the substance of his adopted father.

Accordingly, Luke tells us that in the sixth month from the event previously recorded, the same heavenly being is sent by God to the comparatively obscure town of Nazareth—"Branch

town "—to Mary, the betrothed to Joseph, of the House of David. She is greeted as one with whom the Lord had dealt graciously. She is to be the mother of a Son, Jesus (i.e., Joshua), a Son of the Most High, Who should sit on the throne of David, and of His Kingdom there should be no end. A natural question draws out a further revelation. The Child should be conceived by the Holy Ghost, and should be in a special sense holy, and the Son of God. Mary believes the message and receives the Gift which the all-powerful God bestows in accordance with His eternal purpose. Compare Genesis xviii. 14.

Hurrying to Judah (? Juttah) to be with her kinswoman Elizabeth, the hearts of the aged and the young are opened to each other, and a prophetic spirit seizes them both. Mary is greeted as if already the mother of Elizabeth's Lord; and under divine inspiration pours forth her soul in glad song, learnt in some degree from the words of Hannah (1 Sam. ii.). All generations would count her happy because in her seed the promise made to Abraham would be fulfilled.

Shortly after Mary's visit John was born, circumcised, and named. Zechariah's heart and lips were opened, and he gave forth—probably

in the Hebrew of those days—a song of praise to the God of Israel, not because of the birth of John, but because of the Advent of the Redeemer, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham. Then he turned and looked on his own infant, who was to be the prophet of the Most High, and was to prepare the way of the Lord, according to the utterance of Gabriel. Salvation was to come through pardon, and pardon was to spring from the lovingkindness and tender compassion of "our God," Who should send light and peace into the dark places of the earth.

Every Christian, Jew or Gentile, is under a debt to St. Luke for recovering and including in his narrative these prophetic Jewish songs.

The way is now prepared for the simple story of the birth of the Lord Jesus. First comes a mention of the decree of Augustus, that a registration should be taken which should include the whole Roman Empire. This is the celebrated Fourth Empire of Daniel, and Christianity is at once and for ever linked with History and Prophecy by the Advent of Him Who was both Son of David and Son of God. Luke adds, as if in a note, that this first or former registration took place during the governorship of Cyrenius in the Province of Syria. Sir

William Ramsay has by his researches thrown much light on this historical note,[1] though even yet the exact date is open to discussion.

Whether this was the first registration of the kind is not absolutely clear. Modern students are inclined to put it earlier than it was put in former days.

During all the movements of that stirring time Luke fixes our attention on the couple who have made their way to the City of David, Joseph, a direct descendant of the King, and Mary, who is still regarded as only his betrothed —in the Jewish sense of betrothal—though legally married. Then and there it was that she brought forth her firstborn Son.

So great was the crowd in the Khan, or guest-chamber (see xxii. 11), that the little one had to be laid in the stall, the sheltering-place of the ox and the ass, probably a rude shed (see xiii. 15).

The historian does not stop to tell out his thoughts or dwell on the feelings of those most nearly concerned, but resolutely goes on with his work. A little company of shepherds come in, gently and reverently. They have had a vision of the newborn Saviour-King, and a

[1] See his *Was Christ Born in Bethlehem?* Also his later papers in the *Expositor*. He is now definitely in favour of B.C. 8 for the first Census.

sign is given by which they can identify Him. They see, and rejoice, and tell others.

Then comes the Circumcision, a week later, and the Purification, thirty-three days later still, the maternal Offering at Jerusalem, and the Presentation of the Firstborn (Lev. xii. and Num. viii.). In connexion with the fulfilment of these striking national ordinances, Luke tells us of the visit of Simeon to the Temple at this juncture under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. He takes in his arms the little Child, whom he knew to be the Lord's Anointed, the very embodiment of salvation and light for Jew and Gentile. The Saviour's course, however, would not be easy; the sign should be spoken against; and the mother should have an experience which should pierce her heart. The aged Anna (i.e., Hannah), a prophetess and devotee, came in at the same time to add her note of praise, and told what had happened to others who were looking for redemption. Comfort, Salvation, Redemption, Light, Glory—these were the keynotes of messianic prophecy in the Old Testament, and these all found expression in the heart and voice of those who looked on this Child of forty days.

Shortly afterwards the parents, i.e. Joseph, the adopted father, and Mary, the actual Mother,

removed to Galilee and made Nazareth their home, according to their original plans—not Bethlehem or Jerusalem, as might have been natural under their new circumstances. Luke passes over the visit of the *Magi*, the flight into Egypt, and the death of Herod, as he passes over the Forty Days (xxiv. 26), and as he subsequently passed over Saul's retirement to the desert after his conversion.

Only one event in the Lord's boyhood is recorded. The Child had been growing up and showing special signs of that wisdom which comes from above and which is a mark of the Divine favour. He is now a Boy of twelve—a critical age to the Jew. Year after year they had taken Him to the Passover; but this year, as they returned, they missed Him. It did not alarm them, for probably many of the kinsfolk liked to have this gracious Child in their company, and many a soul may thus have been comforted and cheered. At last, in their anxiety, they turn back. There they find Him in the Temple, quietly sitting amidst the Teachers or Rabbis, listening, questioning and answering with amazing intelligence. The mother's overstrained heart almost brought a reproach to her lips. But what of the Boy's answer? It must be read in the light of all

that went before and that followed after. He was on a mission from his real Father, and must "give Himself wholly to it." (Compare 1 Tim. iv. 15, where this same Greek expression is used.) Evidently He was already conscious that He had come from God.

In spite of this event, which marks a crisis in the earthly life of Jesus, He remains in subordination to those who regarded Him as a precious charge, while steadily advancing in marks of wisdom and favour, being manifestly attractive to all with whom He had to do. But Mary treasured up everything in her heart —that heart which was afterwards to be pierced with many a sorrow. Can Luke have had access to Mary during the later years of her life? It seems likely, and there is no reason to the contrary.

§ 3. Chronology of the Gospel

The historian now enters upon a critical period of history, and gives us an exact date.

Augustus has passed away, and Tiberius has entered upon his fifteenth year of rule. Herod, the King of Judea, has passed away, and Judea has been placed under a Roman Procurator—Pontius Pilate now holding the office. Galilee is now under Herod (Antipas); Ituræa and

Trachonitis are under Philip; Abilene is under Lysanias; Annas (Ananus) and Caiaphas are high priests.

The countries thus enumerated include the whole land of Canaan. Judea stood for the Tribes of Judah, Benjamin, Simeon and Dan. Galilee for Issachar, Zebulun, Asher and Naphtali. Samaria is not named. It stood for Ephraim and Manasseh. Ituræa (Jether or Jedur) stands for the then populous country south of Damascus; and Trachonitis for the region east of the Sea of Galilee, which once included eighty cities in 308 square miles; whilst Abilene is the old Hivite territory round Baalbec, east of Lebanon.

For particulars about these regions and their rulers, we have to refer to the almost contemporary writings of Josephus and to other secular authorities, With such a detailed statement before us it is curious and disappointing that there should be any doubt of the exact date referred to. But the fifteenth year of the command or regency of Tiberius [1] may be reckoned from the year of the City of Rome, 779, when he became joint administrator of the Empire, or 781, when he ruled alone.

[1] The Greek word which we render "reign" is best rendered regency or rulership.

The other possible dates appear to be (according to the Roman reckoning, i.e. from the building of the city), 753 B.C.

Herod Antipas	750–792
Herod Philip	750–786
Lysanias. Date uncertain.[1]	
Pontius Pilate (the 6th Procurator after the Deposition of Archelaus) . .	779–789
Deposition of Annas . . .	779
15th of Tiberius	779–781

It may be difficult for us to adjust these statements with what we gather from other sources, but they are historical and trustworthy, and they point to the year of the city, 779, as the date in question, that is, to A.D. 26.

After all, what is the event which has caused this remarkable statement and which took place at this juncture? It is the mission of John the Baptist.

§ 4. John's Preaching

There came a Divine message to John. He emerged from his seclusion and came into the Plain of Jordan, near Jericho. In this region, moving up and down the valley according to circumstances, he called men to repent that they might be forgiven; he warned them

[1] See Josephus, *Ant.* xx. vii. 1. He is not to be confused with an earlier Ruler of the same name.

against a mere trust in their ancestry or in their profession; their religion must be fruit-bearing; they must be just and generous; nor must they delay. Trouble was impending; decision must be immediate and must be signified by Baptism, wherein they pledged themselves to repentance, and God, on His part, pledged Himself to pardon. There was nothing new in this teaching. It may be found in the first of Isaiah and elsewhere. The novelty lay in its force and brevity and in two important additions which had to do with the Kingdom and the King. One was to come Who was infinitely greater than John, and those who sought and received Baptism from Him would find themselves under the dominating and inspiring influence of the Holy Ghost. In His day there would be a great testing and sifting. Thus John's work was strictly preparatory; he broke up the fallow ground, and prepared the way of Jehovah.

Luke adds a brief note on the imprisonment of John, and later on he refers to John's message of inquiry concerning Jesus, and to the Lord's practical answer and subsequent comments (vii. 18–35). See also chapter xi. 1 with reference to his instruction on prayer; xvi. 16 on the critical change in dispensations which his

preaching ushered in ; xx. 4–6 on his authority and success. In Luke's second volume we have reference to the fulfilment of his great prophetic utterance in chapter i. 5 and xi. 16, and of the long continuance of the effect of his teaching in distant lands in chapters xviii. 25 and xix. 3, 4.

It is needless to say more here about the character and influence of this remarkable prophet. His name and mission must have been well known among the Jews ; and Josephus, the Jewish historian, refers to it (*Ant.* xviii. v. 2).

§ 5. Jesus Comes on the Scene

Among those who were baptized came Jesus. Thus simply Luke introduces the theme of his narrative. Jesus prays, and His Father answers. The door of the spirit-world is opened. The dove-like form and movement of the Holy Ghost is manifested to the prophetic eye of John, whilst the Father's voice signifies His approval of the Son Whose mission is just about to begin.

Jesus is now about thirty, and Luke takes the opportunity of tracing the pedigree of the Lord's adopted father, Joseph, up to David, thence to Abraham, thence to Adam, and so to Him Who said, "Let us make man in our image." It is to be noticed that adoption is a very ancient

system. Rules concerning it are given in the Code of Khamurabi, which dates from the age of Abraham. Augustus himself was an adopted son ; so was Tiberius.

§ 6. The Lord's Temptation

The Lord's Baptism was followed by a short period of special probation. The mission of the Beloved Son is regarded as unique ; and His mental and spiritual attitude towards the Father, towards Israel—whose King He came to be—and towards Evil, is not discussed theologically, but is illustrated by a series of events and utterances. Here, as elsewhere, Luke never writes as a theologian ; he is simply a recorder.

The tempting or testing to which Jesus was subjected at the outset of His work was, in some respects, akin to what every son of man has to go through. About this Luke says nothing. The conflicts endured in His youth and manhood may have been intense, but He had the secret of victory ; He was ever in the presence of the Father, communicating with Him in prayer ; a Son in original nature and by cultivated habit, always ready, mixing with people who by no means lived up to His own standard of godliness, recognizing not only the

moral risks to which human nature was liable, but also the animosity of the secret Enemy of all righteousness.

In addition to this He had to face the immediate future. The hour had come for the inauguration of His mission, and His carrying out of this mission would be coloured and characterized by the way in which He should resist the wiles of the Evil One, in the watchful and prayerful spirit which he called on His disciples to exercise in later days (xxii. 40–46).

The testing questions were threefold :—

First, should He turn stones into bread to satisfy His natural desires? He evidently had the power to do so, or else the suggestion put before Him would have had no meaning. Should He, Who came to feed the hungry, feed Himself? It was a real temptation after the long fast. But He had manna to eat which Satan knew not of.

Second, should He accept kingship and an empire at the hand of the Evil One? He was conscious, indeed, that He possessed the needful administrative power and that He came to be a King. But would such a course be loyal to His Father and in real accordance with His mission? It was repelled with indignation.

Third, should He throw Himself down from

the wing of the Temple and thus risk His life? He came, it is true, to give up His life in a special way as a ransom for many, but was this the time or the way in which to put God's power to the test?

The temptations evidently bore on His mission, and He repelled them in the spirit of a true Israelite, armed with the words contained in the parting addresses of Moses (Deut. viii. 3, vi. 13, 16). He had evidently hidden these divine messages in His heart that He might not sin against God His Father.

It is implied by the writer that these, or similar temptations, were recurrent. Satan only left Jesus "for a season." But prayer was recurrent also. Many a crisis arose, many a disappointment, much that was trying (i.e. testing) in the ignorance and faithlessness of His special followers and in the vacillation of the people; many an opportunity for Him to become Head of a national or political rising; many a trap set for Him by His foes. All this time He was learning obedience by what He went through. Especially was this the case in the darkest of all days, when everything combined against Him. But then, as Luke tells us later on, He was loyal to what was "written," and was upheld by the certainty that the Father's

will was being done. Then, true to His fixed habit of prayer, He just committed Himself to the Righteous Judge.

The difference between Luke's order and that of Matthew is interesting to the student, but presents no real difficulty. We have already seen that Luke does not necessarily tie himself to an absolute chronological order.

In a later passage (xxii. 28, 29) the Lord refers to other temptations which He had been through when in company with His followers, and indicates that they were preparatory for the day of His Kingdom. He needed to be tempted, tested, tried in all points, so as to be proved sinless yet sympathetic. This thought is worked out in the Letter to the Hebrews in connexion with the Lord's Priestly Office.

§ 7. The Lord's Ministry

We now enter upon the narrative of what Jesus did and said during His public ministry and before His final journey to Jerusalem. It takes us from Luke iv. 14 up to the beginning of chapter xix. The historian does not divide it into periods, and we could not tell from his pages how much time was occupied by the Lord in His active ministrations. He seems to have been always on the move, journeying from place

to place, chiefly in Galilee (which is about the size of Yorkshire), sometimes crossing the Lake (which Luke never dignifies by the name of Sea), having as his headquarters the busy city of Capernaum, the very site of which is still questioned by some. Luke's method is to give us a series of scenes in which Jesus is the central figure, and He is represented either as healing, or as teaching, or as doing both together, combining in Himself the work of a modern evangelist, a medical missionary, and a wonder-worker. Every superficial observer would see this much, but the thoughtful student of Old Testament Scriptures and of character would realize that in Him "God was visiting His people."

In order to appreciate the narrative we must throw ourselves back into the age and country, and must consider the people and their ideas.

Thanks, chiefly, to Josephus, we can picture up the state of things politically and socially. We see Judaism modernized by Hellenism in Galilee of the Gentiles; the Synagogues are frequented on the Sabbath; the people are still, to some extent, under the influence of the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms; Herod is backed up by the Roman power; but Scribes and other interpreters of the Law retain their hold of the people; Sadduceeism is undermining

the old faith of the days of Nehemiah, while Pharisaism is seeking to maintain it in a somewhat formal way. Amid the distractions of business, agriculture, pastoral life and fishing there are occasional visits to the Temple Courts at Jerusalem. Some people were strict, others lax in such matters. The spirit of patriotism which the Maccabees had evoked had not died out altogether, and there was lurking in the minds of many a Hope which they hardly knew how to put into words, but which they summed up in the thought of the coming of the promised Christ or Messiah, the anointed King. When He came, all would be made right. John the Baptist's preaching had prepared many hearts for this event.

Such was the state of things when Jesus "returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee." He was soon known as a Teacher. He taught in their Synagogues, being glorified of all. His word was with power, and was listened to with intense astonishment; all the more so because it was accompanied with extraordinary deeds, so that His fame went out into all parts of the country. People crowded to Him as they do now in the East to a notable healer. All that had any sick with divers diseases brought them to Him, and He laid hands

on each one and healed them. It became more and more difficult for Him to get any quiet time, or even to move from place to place. Teaching, preaching and healing occupied His time. As one of His followers said, a few years later, "He went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed by the Devil, for God was with Him" (Acts x. 38). In one case we read that Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting by who were come out of every town in Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem (Luke v. 17), some really interested, others suspicious. In another case we are told that a great multitude from Judea and Jerusalem, and from the sea coast of Tyre and Sidon, came to hear Him and be healed, also those who were vexed with unclean spirits; and the whole multitude sought to touch Him, for there went virtue or power out of Him and healed them all (vi. 17–19). Again we read: "He cured many of their infirmities and plagues and of evil spirits." . . . "The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the Good News is preached" (vii. 22). In another place He receives the people, speaks to them of the Kingdom of God, and heals those who have need of healing (ix. 11). At length His twelve chief followers are appointed to

share His work, and afterwards seventy others also (ix. 1 and x. 1). It is interesting to see that He had so many whom He could trust in those early days, and to Whom He could communicate both needful knowledge for teaching and power for working.

§ 8. Samples of the Lord's Mighty Works

The historian, however, is not content with generalities. He cites some twenty detailed instances of the Lord's mighty works, and frequently notices the lessons to be learnt from them. They are given us in the following order, though Luke does not guarantee that this is the order in which they happened :—

Chapter iv. 33–35 (compare Mark i. 23, etc., which gives the same narrative in the same surroundings). In the Synagogue of Capernaum, doubtless on the Sabbath, among the worshippers is a man with a strange affliction, an unclean spirit, or demon, thus having a double personality. He recognizes the Nazarene as the Holy One of God, and at the Lord's order the poor possessed man is set free.

Chapter iv. 38 (compare Mark i. 29). Immediately after the previous incident, and in the house

in which He was a guest, He rebukes the fever with which Simon's mother-in-law was afflicted —as He had rebuked the unclean spirit—and the woman is made strong and fit for service.

Chapter v. 4, etc. After teaching from Simon's boat, He orders the fishermen to launch out and let down the nets. He is obeyed, though not without some natural reluctance, and the result is an extraordinary draught of fish. Simon is so impressed by this event that the realities of the spirit-world flash upon his soul, and he awakens to a sense of his own sinfulness. But Jesus takes the opportunity to give him a mission—"Thou shalt catch men." His brother and their partners shared the call (*see* Matt. iv. 18; Mark i. 17).

Chapter v. 12 (no time or place given; but *see* Matt. viii. 2, Mark i. 40). A man full of leprosy beseeches Him, "If Thou wilt, Thou canst cleanse me." He was certain of the Lord's power, but not equally certain of His will. The matter, however, was instantly settled, and the cleansed man is charged to carry out the ritual prescribed in the Law of Moses. The commotion caused by this event is described by Mark (i. 45) and also by Matthew (viii. 4), who calls

attention to the fact that the man in his zeal and indiscretion failed to secure for the Lord that comparative quietness which He desired.

Chapter v. 18 (compare Matt. ix. 2, Mark ii. 3). In a densely-packed building, a palsied or paralysed man is let down before Jesus by four faithful friends. The Lord knows that every eye is upon Him and every ear striving to catch His words. Amid the silence of the throng He speaks: "Thy sins are forgiven." This utterance must have been a surprise to all; but it was good news to one, though a stumbling-block to many others. The captious critics murmur, "Who is this that forgiveth sins?" Probably they thought and spoke to one another in Hebrew,[1] and knew that there was one Biblical Hebrew word for Pardon which was used only of *Divine* forgiveness. The Lord, Who knew what He would do, and Who was a thought-reader, solves all speculative criticism in a moment. "Take up thy bed and walk." Without hesitation the man obeys, and his outward and visible liberation is claimed as a sign that the Son of Man had authority on earth to pro-

[1] i.e. the Hebrew of that time, which many prefer to call Aramaic or Aramean. The word in question is סלח (*see Synonyms of the Old Testament*).

claim pardon to the sinner, and, indeed, not only to proclaim it, but to effect it.

Chapter vi. 6 (compare Matt. xii. 9, Mark iii. 1). The Lord is again in a Synagogue on the Sabbath, teaching. A man with a withered hand is there. Jesus tells him to stand up in the midst whilst He questions the learned men present on the real use of the Sabbath. Then He bids the man stretch forth his hand, and it is there and then restored. It was another picture-lesson for those who were neglecting the great things which make human life so precious.

Chapter vii. 2 (Matt. viii. 5). The Lord had been engaged in teaching multitudes on the lines of what we call the Sermon on the Mount, and He is back in Capernaum. The Centurion sends Jewish elders to implore Him on behalf of His servant. His faith was strong (though He was not an Israelite); so much so that Jesus marvelled at him. This foreigner combined love for Israel with deep humility and with confidence in the simple word of command uttered by Jesus. He finds what he seeks.

Matthew gives us a lesson founded on the event, but Luke reserves it for another place (xiii. 29), and hastens on to tell us of another

illustration of the power and compassion of Jesus.

Chapter vii. 11. The Lord is approaching Nain, and His visit is so timed that as He and the people who swarmed after Him approach the town they met the mourners coming out of the gate to bury the lad, whose lifeless body is stretched out on the bier. The widow is bewailing her only-begotten son, but her tears are speedily dried. The Lord's voice of command reaches the spirit-world. The boy sat up, "and He gave him to his mother."

Chapter viii. 22 (compare Matt. viii. 23, Mark iv. 35). When crossing the lake a storm of wind arises. Jesus is awakened, and He rebukes the wind and the waves (as He had rebuked the unclean spirit and the fever), and He said to His disciples, Where is your faith? They had shown some faith, for they had awakened Him, but evidently they were still lacking in calm confidence.

Chapter viii. 26 (compare Matt. viii. 28, Mark v. 1). Having crossed the lake, He is appealed to by a possessed man, and addressed as the Son of the Most High God. His case was alto-

gether a terrible one and was attended by the strangest circumstances. But He who had calmed the storm brought peace to the storm-tossed soul. The man is "saved" (v. 36), and he becomes a native missionary, his whole aspect a condition testifying to what Jesus had done for him in the Name of God.

Chapter viii. 41 (compare Matt. ix. 18, Mark v. 22). A ruler of the synagogue, Jairus by name, pleads with Him on behalf of his daughter, his only child, who was dying or, perhaps, already dead. He is encouraged to believe when faith seemed impossible. With three followers, the Lord enters the house, takes the child by the hand, and calls, as He had done in the case of the widow's son at Nain. "Her spirit came again to her, and she arose." The matter, however, was to be kept quiet, so far as possible.

Chapter viii. 43 (compare Matt. ix. 20, Mark v. 25). Meanwhile, there pressed through the crowd that had followed the Lord on His errand of mercy, a woman who was suffering from a distressing and inveterate disease. She had made up her mind that if she could only touch the hem or fringe of His Jewish garment she would be saved. She touched, and her faith

saved her. But the Lord thought well to draw out a confession from her before going on to the Ruler's house.

Chapter ix. 12 (compare Matt. xiv. 15, Mark vi. 35, John vi. 5). Crowds had been listening to the Lord's teaching in the region north of the lake. Daylight was slipping away. After a conference with their Master, the disciples order the whole crowd of people to settle down on the grass in companies of fifty each. Then they distribute to the people an ample and satisfying feast. Whence came it? The lad's five thin cakes with a few little fish had been brought to the Lord, and He had done the rest, in dependence on His Father. Every one was happy that day, perhaps, especially, the little lad. The disciples were not to forget the lesson of trust which they had learned, and the multitudes were to learn a more strange and solemn lesson on the needs of the inner being, and on the Bread which would satisfy them.

Chapter ix. 37 (compare Matt. xvii. 14, Mark ix. 14). On the day after the Transfiguration a third case of an only-begotten child is recorded. There are crowds round, and the piteous case is described by the father. To

make it more distressing, it is added that the Lord's disciples had failed in their endeavours to deliver the child from the thraldom of the spirit which possessed him. The Master speaks sharply to the faithless and perverse generation, who were then trying his patience to the uttermost. But He rebukes the spirit, heals the boy, and restores him to his father. The case was evidently a special one.

Chapter xi. 14 (compare Matt. ix. 32; also xii. 22, etc.). The dumb man possessed is cured. A discussion follows, in which the thoughts of many hearts are brought to light.

Chapter xiii. 10. In the Synagogue, on a Sabbath, there is a woman bowed down with a spirit of infirmity, Satan being the prime cause of the trouble. Jesus calls her and says, "Woman, thou art loosed," accompanying his words with the laying on of His hands. Her faith is thus rewarded, for she is a true daughter of Abraham; the Sabbath rest is set forth in its true character, and the critics are put to shame.

Chapter xiv. 2. Again it is a Sabbath, and the Lord is a guest in the house of a chief Pharisee. A dropsical man has found his way

in. Would the Lord abstain from healing him because it was the Rest-day? By no means. He took hold of him and healed him and let him go; and He accompanied His action with an appeal to the common sense of the company.

Chapter xvii. 12. As He approached a village in or near the Samaritan border, ten lepers appealed to Him for mercy. He tells them what to do, and as they went their faith was rewarded, and they were cleansed. One, a Samaritan, came back at once, glorifying God and giving thanks to Jesus. His faith had saved him in more senses than one.

Chapter xviii. 35 (compare Matt. xx. 21, Mark x. 46). Near Jericho sat a blind man, begging. He had evidently used his ears well and had picked up a good deal of knowledge. Hearing that "Jesus the Nazarene" was passing, he called Him, "Son of David." Again and again his cry rang out. He got his reward. His faith saved him. He followed Jesus, glorifying God.

Chapter xxii. 50 (compare Matt. xxvi. 51, Mark xiv. 47, John xviii. 10). In the excitement of the moment when the Lord was taken,

one of His followers cut off the right ear of the High Priest's servant. Jesus said to His captors: "Grant Me this favour," and He touched his ear and healed him. It is noteworthy that, though all the Gospels tell of Peter's deed, St. Luke only narrates the act of healing.

§ 9. View of these Works as a Whole

On surveying these incidents, many things must have struck Theophilus, as they still strike us:—

They are only samples of many similar events.

They were all wrought in Galilee, except the last two.

They were all wrought in public or before a chosen few.

They were prompted mainly by compassion.

They were accompanied with or surrounded by Teaching, e.g. concerning the Sabbath, the value of life, the reward of faith.

They were not done for gain, or to get notoriety, though they could not fail to secure attention.

They are never called miracles or signs by the writer, but were regarded as the expression of "virtue," i.e. power.

They were of great variety, indicating mas-

tery over the sea, the air, infirmity, leprosy, disease, possession, death.

They were complete in their efficacy. The disciple might fail through unbelief, but the Master never failed.

They were wrought by Jesus (so far as we can judge) in the name of God. In His Name evil of every sort is rebuked, and the Evil One defeated. The Son is a Steward of the Father. He times His movements and exercises the powers committed to Him in such ways as should cause men to glorify God and to usher in the downfall of Satan. The strong man would thus be overcome by the Stronger.

No one who saw these things, and who knew and believed the barest outline of Truth contained in the Old Testament, could fail to see that the God of Creation and of Nature and of Providence was manifesting Himself afresh, as He had done in the days of Moses and Elijah, and that the Divine purposes and bright hopes indicated in the prophetic writings were being fulfilled, or were to be fulfilled, immediately. John the Baptist's mission had prepared the way and had aroused the national conscience, but John had done no such mighty works as

Jesus did. John had died at the whim of a despot. What would happen to Jesus? His command of nature was superhuman but subordinated to the will of His Father. What of His command of the human heart? He was evidently a thought-reader, and was fearless in His utterances. As we read the record of His beneficent deeds, we do not wonder that crowds followed Him, led by surprise and curiosity and gratitude. But how would it all end? Would the scribes and Pharisees, the Rulers and Chief Priests, hand over to Him the reins of religious government? They were certainly losing ground, and their influence was being steadily undermined by Him. This could not be allowed to go on. The matter must be fought out, not in Galilee, but at Jerusalem.

It should be added that, from the point of view of later times, it is a great advantage that most of the mighty works which St. Luke guarantees as historical are to be found in other Gospels, and with the slight variations which shows that they are not mere mechanical copies.

§ 10. The Lord's Teaching

It has been pointed out that the Lord's

mighty works, which Luke records in his own order and in his own words, are not a mere string of wonders. They are closely associated with His Teaching and Preaching. This opens a large subject. As the Lord's works illustrate His mastery over nature, so do His words exhibit His insight into Truth and into the needs of the human heart.

One of the most common titles applied to Him was Rabbi, or Teacher (A.V., Master). It appears thirteen times in Luke's narrative, whilst the cognate verb is used seventeen times. The verb which signifies to evangelize or tell good news is specially used in Luke and Acts, while the word which marks proclamation as by a herald is freely used by the first three evangelists. Luke also uses another word for master (ἐπιστάτης) in six places, but it is used in no other Book.

These teachings, preachings and proclaimings took place in the Synagogues, on the hillside, on the seashore, in the house, and in later days in the Temple courts. They were attended by crowds, old and young, learned and unlearned, men and women. The Lord adapted Himself to His audience. His net drew in all sorts, good and bad. Sometimes He addressed the crowd before Him; sometimes He spoke to

His disciples, i.e. those who adhered to Him as their Teacher, either in the presence of the crowd or in private; sometimes to His critics, the scribes and Pharisees.

The first impression produced by His teaching was that He spoke with authority and not as the scribes.

What was the nature of this authority? and in what sense did His teaching differ from that of the scribes?

The teaching of the scribes, who were the Professors of that day, may be regarded as technical and conventional. Judging from indications in the Talmud, it would consist largely of hair-splitting distinctions, in *minutiæ*, and betokened a regard for the letter of the law rather than for its spirit. Traditional interpretations overlaid and practically superseded the direct teaching of the Law and the Prophets. The voice of God, which was intended to reach heart and intellect and conscience, could no longer be heard by the seeker after Truth. It is true that the Scriptures of the Old Testament were read in the Synagogue every Sabbath day, and were theoretically held as the final Court of Appeal; but practically they were made of no effect through Jewish Church Tradition.

It seems that any person of repute might stand up to read in the Synagogue, and then sit down to teach and give a word of exhortation; but practically there were ministers, readers and teachers on whom these tasks devolved, and they formed a body which might be compared to a caste or guild of professional men. With them were associated the ecclesiastical corporation of Priests and Levites, whilst at rare intervals there would rise up a man who by common consent would be regarded as a Prophet.

Amid the multiplicity of teachers, where did the Lord Jesus come in? He was neither Priest nor Levite. He was not recognized by scribes and lawyers as belonging to their body. Could He be a prophet? Could He be more than a prophet? His claims were discussed freely and frequently. At last He was definitely asked by the Chief Priests and scribes to tell them His authority, but He knew the hollowness of his questioners and refused to tell (Luke xx. 1–8).

Certainly, prophet or no prophet, the Lord was neither professional nor conventional. He was direct, clear, knowing the Scripture, knowing also human nature, getting beneath the surface, fearlessly challenging the learned,

appealing to every man's conscience, sympathetic yet severe, recognizing the value of the present life, but regarding it as a doorway to the future. He went to the root of the matter, and it is not hard to find out the central truths which He taught.

§ 11. The Kingdom of God

The substance of the Teaching may be gathered round one phrase, which is repeated some thirty-six times in the narrative. It is the Kingdom of God. We are so familiar with this expression that we hardly consider what it really signifies or what meaning the people would attach to it when the Lord Jesus proclaimed it.

Knowing, as the most unlettered must have known, that God was a righteous God, that He delighted in what was right, whilst wrong-doing would affect Him as a false note affects a musician; knowing also that sin and death and endless evils were reigning in the world, even among those that boasted of their descent from Abraham, the good news that the reign of God was at hand must have thrilled their souls with gladness, for it meant the reign of righteousness, of justice and of mercy, and the dominance of good over evil in the individual, in the nation, and, sooner or later, in other nations.

This sounds ethical, but when the name of "God" is substituted for "righteousness," it becomes religious.

But how was this great change to be effected? A searching of the Scriptures would lead men to the conclusion that the great spiritual and social revolution involved must be effected through the calling forth of One Who should be a Witness and Leader and Commander to the people, Who should re-establish the Theocracy as representing God, and Who should be a Son of David in some special sense, and of Whose Kingdom there should be no end.

Thus, the Kingdom of God and of righteousness involved the reign of the true Son of David, the anointed One, Who should be at once a Leader or Chief, and a Saviour or Deliverer. His sovereignty should be established over the heart, conscience and activities of those who believed in Him. Salvation would be to them, primarily, something internal, a breaking down of pride and self-righteousness, an unveiling of the spiritual eye to the true nature of God, an inbreathing and inworking of a vital force from above—the Holy Spirit—a separation from all that was opposed to the will of God, and a delight in what was pleasing to Him. Externally, salvation would show

itself in conduct, in speech and action, and in thoughtfulness for others. Times of hardship and persecution would bring it out in its brightest colours. The final development would be in the future, when the King shall return and bring with Him that salvation which is "ready to be revealed in the last times."

It would be difficult for any expectant soul to judge beforehand how the good news of the Kingdom should be proclaimed and how the reign of righteousness should be established. Should it be by a sudden intervention, a demonstration which should appeal at once to eye and ear, to heart and conscience, so that all the people then living in the land should be morally and spiritually revolutionized in a moment? Whatever theories one might hold, at any rate, this was by no means the way in which God wrought His salvation. The Divine plan was carried out in the course of a generation by a Life lived, laid down, and regained; by teaching, by working, and by direct spiritual action.

§ 12. The Lord's Figurative Language

Christ's teaching was not what would now be called Systematic Theology, though there was system beneath the surface. It consisted

largely of short practical utterances in popular language. In accordance with the style of the day and of the land, the Lord's language was figurative rather than mystical; and we may distinguish between three classes of figurative language, whether as reported by Luke or by his contemporaries. First, there are cases where figures are used conventionally and informally, so that, unless one realizes that they are figures, one would regard them as exaggerations and as calculated to mislead. Thus (Luke xiv. 26) we read that the Lord turned to a multitude that followed Him and said, "If anyone come to Me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple; and whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after Me, cannot be My disciple." None of the crowd would misunderstand these words. The word "hate" was introduced to show that a disciple's first love was to be given to the Master; and the word "cross"—far more intelligible then than now—would teach the hearers that they must risk persecution and infamy to the uttermost, if they wished to be counted as followers of Jesus. It is to be noticed that the Lord was not laying down the conditions under which a man might come, but the condi-

tions under which he should live after he had come. The words "He cannot *be* My disciple," are by no means the same as "He cannot *become* My disciple."

Again, when He said, "He that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one" (xxii. 36), it was not a literal order that every disciple should wear a sword, but rather a warning that the days of persecution from which they had been happily free were now imminent.

Such figurative language is easily remembered, and if at times it is capable of misinterpretation —which we know all too well—this very danger serves to draw out our thought, and also our humility, and our prayer for a right judgment when studying the Master's teaching. It should be added that all language is symbolical, and that the things of earth and the course of this world must perforce be used to set forth spiritual truth. The very word "spirit" reminds us of this, for whether we take it to mean "wind" or "breath" (in the original), we see how readily it may stand for an unseen force or feeling.

No one could possibly understand the A.B.C. of the Old Testament or of John the Baptist's teaching, or of the words of the Lord Jesus,

without bearing this "simple caution in mind." What, for example, is a Kingdom? heaven? a Father?

Also, with regard to such words as salt, fire, light, a crown, armour, clothing, walking, sitting, standing, fighting, wrestling, running, racing—it is a commonplace that the affairs of this world represent and illustrate the realities which the eye cannot see nor the ear hear, but which are absolutely real—as we shall know better hereafter.

The second class of figurative language comes under the head of similitudes. In these cases figures are generally referred to *as* figures, and are thus more formal in character and less capable of misinterpretation.

Thus (Luke v. 34, etc.), the case of the disciples, when in the company of their Lord, is compared with that of the children of the bride-chamber when the bridegroom is with them; also, the need of new institutions in connexion with new teaching is compared with the necessity of putting new wine into new wine-skins (compare Matt. viii. 14, etc., and Mark ii. 18, etc.).

Again, the teachers of the day are compared with the blind leading the blind, the result of which is disastrous to both (vi. 39; compare

Matt. xv. 14). The verses which follow are all of the nature of similitudes. We must get rid of our own "beam" before we deal with another's "mote." We cannot expect to bring forth good fruit unless our heart is right. And the condition of our heart is sure to show itself in our words. If we want to be true followers of the Master we must dig deep and get down to the rock; otherwise our profession will be superficial and will end in collapse.

Another similitude is introduced in vii. 31 (compare Matt. xi. 16): "Whereunto shall I liken the men of this generation? and to what are they like?" All the listeners would have their attention called by this question. To what would He compare them? They are like perverse and unsympathetic children who would not share in the games of others, and would be neither grave nor gay when called upon to take their part. So it was with the people who criticized the Baptist as too ascetic and the Son of Man as too sociable.

Sometimes it is not easy to determine whether we have a similitude or a parable before us, because one grows up so easily into another. This is the case in xiii. 24, etc., where the Lord gives a practical answer to a speculative question, and warns the undecided that they must

gather up their energies, so that they may enter in while they have time, before the Master of the house shuts the door finally, when all their pleadings would be in vain, and they would be left a prey to remorse.

Some of these similitudes are based on Old Testament utterances. The reference to the ox and ass, in chapter xiv. 5, is hardly figurative, though it is illustrative, but it leads up to a far-reaching lesson. Luke tells us (as if he or his authority had been at the banquet) that Jesus put forth a parable, i.e. a similitude, to those who were bidden when He marked how they chose out the chief divans. The exhortation which followed must have reminded some of his hearers of Proverbs xxv. 6, 7 : "Put not forth thyself in the presence of the King, and stand not in the place of the great, for better is it that it be said unto thee, Come up hither, than that thou shouldest be put lower in the presence of the Prince." The Lord adds a word on self-exaltation and self-humiliation which He was to repeat in chapter xviii. 14. This reminds us that He was not aiming at originality, and that He did not shrink from repeating Himself when He wanted to drive home an important lesson. Other cases of repetition in Luke's record may be mentioned :—

There is the important utterance, "Thy faith hath saved thee" (or, made thee whole) (vii. 50; viii. 48; xviii. 42).

"There is nothing secret that shall not be made manifest" (viii. 17; xii. 2).

"Whosoever hath, to him shall be given" (viii. 18; xix. 26).

"Take up the cross" (ix. 23; xiv. 27).

"To save life is to lose it" (ix. 24; xvii. 33).

"Shake off the dust" (ix. 5; x. 11).

The call to confess the Lord (ix. 26; xii. 8).

"To whom much is given, of him much is required" (xii. 48; compare xvi. 10–12).

"Not one stone to stand on another" (xix. 44; xxi. 6).

To these must be added the repeated references to the Lord's death and resurrection (ix. 22, 44; xviii. 32, 33; see also xx. 17; xxiv. 7, 46).

Occasionally proverbial expressions are used which may have been current in the country, e.g., "Physician, heal thyself" (iv. 23); "no prophet is accepted in his own country" (iv. 24; compare Matt. xiii. 57, Mark vi. 4, also John iv. 44, which was uttered apparently on a different occasion); x. 7, "the labourer is worthy of his hire" (compare Matt. x. 10 and 1 Tim. v. 8).

§ 13. The Parables

The distinction between similitudes and parables seemed to be, that the latter are narratives which present certain analogies with the truths they are intended to illustrate. They were not far-fetched or difficult for the original hearers to comprehend, though the lesson to be drawn from them might be hard to see; still less are they fabulous, like Jotham's fable about the Trees anointing a King (Judges ix. 7). They appeal to the interests of every day life, to agriculture, fishing, commerce, to the marriage feast, to misfortune, to service. But there is one characteristic in which they all, or almost all, share—they are eminently human and bring out the excellencies, defects or interests of human nature as shown in the dealings of man with man. Taking them in the order given by St. Luke, the Lord's parables are as follows :—

Chapter viii. 4 (compare Matt. xiii. 2; Mark iv. 1). The Lord had been busy preaching and evangelizing in all the cities and villages (of Galilee), a task which must have taken a good year, and crowds were following Him. His case was like that of a sower, and there

were four classes of recipients of the Word of God, as there are four kinds of ground on which ordinary seed falls. The illustration seems to us very simple, and we cannot help feeling some surprise that the disciples did not recognize its meaning at once; but the Lord's explanation is most instructive, and seems to have been uttered for all time, as every modern evangelist knows.

Chapter x. 30 (see Matt. xix. 16; xxii. 35; Mark x. 17; Luke xviii. 18). A student of law inquires what he is to do that he may inherit eternal life. The Lord, in His answer, gives him two passages from the law which the man professes to study—one from Deuteronomy vi. and the other from Leviticus xix. The latter passage gives rise to an inquiry which might lead to endless discussion—"and who is my neighbour?" The Lord replies by the story of the Good Samaritan, and leaves the man to draw his own conclusion and to act upon it.

Chapter xii. 16. The Lord was surrounded by a dense crowd, and in their presence He had been uttering words of good cheer and counsel to His immediate followers. He is

interrupted by one of the company, who wanted Him to interfere on his behalf (as Martha had done, chap. x. 40). The Lord took the opportunity to plant a lesson on covetousness by the parable of the rich fool. "So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

Chapter xiii. 6. A local calamity led the Lord to speak of the pressing need of repentance. He adds the parable of the fruitless fig-tree. For three years fruit had been looked for in vain. Should one more year of grace be added? Have we here a key to the chronology of the Lord's ministration? Perhaps not; but we have what is more important, a key to Divine long-suffering.

Chapter xiii. 18 (compare Matt. xiii. 31; Mark iv. 30). Amid general rejoicing over all the glorious things which were done by Him, He compared the Kingdom of God to the growth of a grain of mustard seed into a tree, and also to the way in which leaven permeates the whole of the meal into which a woman casts it. The man puts the grain into his garden, and the woman puts the ferment into the baking. The rest is done by nature, i.e. in

accordance with the laws of development ordered by God. So it is in the case of the external and internal development of the Kingdom.

Chapter xiv. 16 (compare Matt. xxii. 2). Some one sitting at table with Him, on an occasion already referred to, who had heard the Lord's words concerning self-exaltation, and also concerning recompense at the resurrection of the righteous, utters a sentiment concerning the happiness of anyone who should eat bread in the Kingdom of God. Probably, his ideas of the Kingdom of God were rather vague, and he little understood that it did not consist of meat and drink, i.e. of the process of eating and drinking, but of righteousness and peaceableness and joyfulness in the Holy Ghost (Rom. xiv. 17). The Lord told the story of the Great Supper, of the excuses, and of the way in which the house had finally to be filled. Few, if any, of his hearers could have seen the point of the story; but there is a tone of severity about the rejection of the guests originally invited which could not be misunderstood.

Chapter xv. (compare Matt. ix. 10, 11;

xi. 19; xxi. 31, 32; Mark ii. 15, 16; Luke v. 30; vii. 34). Something in our Lord's teaching exercised an attractive influence on that strange assortment of people who were classed together as "publicans and sinners." He not only received them, but sat down at the same table with them. What His own disciples thought of this we cannot tell, but it roused the criticism of the Pharisees and scribes. This led to the utterance of three parables, two of which were rather of the nature of similitudes, the first being also uttered on another occasion (Matt. xviii. 12).

There is the joy over the finding of a lost sheep or a lost coin, one being specially interesting to a man and the other to a woman. This is taken to illustrate the joy in heaven over one repentant sinner. It hangs upon the value of the human being in the sight of Heaven, and upon the vital importance of that spiritual change which the word Repentance involves.

Then comes the story of the erring son, his troubles, his repentance, his loving reception by his father, the hard and half-jealous criticism of the elder brother, and the gentle but firm words with which his complaint is answered. It was a time of rejoicing, for the dead was alive and the lost was found. The father felt it, and

the brother ought to feel it too. The hearers who had been murmuring must readily have seen the application of the story to themselves.

Chapter xvi. 1. The occasion is not given, but there seems to be a connexion between the Prodigal Son and the Prodigal Steward (xv. 13 and xvi. 1). Whatever was the device of the steward, the rich man who employed him recognized its wisdom, so the man's provision for the future is set before the disciples as an incitement to turn to good account the means put into their trust, which is so frequently used for unrighteous purposes. They were to be faithful in little things and to be whole-hearted in service. The Pharisees, who had been listeners, understood it all too well, and they derided Him.

Chapter xvi. 19. On the same or a similar occasion, the Lord related the Parable of the rich man and the poor man (whom the A.V., unfortunately, calls a "beggar"). The story leads directly on from this world to Hades, where the condition of the two men was inverted. The poor man, a true child of Abraham, has the reward of faith. The rich man is consumed by remorse and cannot get relief. A new chapter is now added to the story (as in

some other parables). There are five brothers; what is to be done for them? A spirit or ghost from Hades would surely rouse them and bring them to repentance? No. This is not God's way of dealing with the worldly and impenitent Jew. They have the Law and the Prophets, the Old Testament Scriptures, which contain the voice of the Lord of the spirits of all flesh. If those will not convict and convert a sinner from the error of his ways, no apparition will do it. With this parable in our hands, we see at once why the risen Lord only appeared to chosen witnesses (Acts x. 40, 41).

Chapter xviii. 1 (compare Ps. lxxxviii. 1). Here, as so often, Luke gives the reason of a parable or the lesson to be drawn from it. There is the unjust judge, and there is the widow's cry for vindication. The man is wearied out with her crying and takes up her cause. But there is another cry from the heart of God's chosen ones in the time of their calamity. Will He not vindicate their cause, and that speedily? But the cry must spring out of a faithful heart.

Chapter xviii. 9. The lesson—says Luke at the beginning and the Lord Himself at the end—is on the perils of self-righteousness. The contrast between the characters is complete—

more so, perhaps, than in the case of the rich man and the poor man. To the outward observer the one was so excellent, so distinguished, so thankful in his acknowledgments. He was free from gross immorality. He fasted regularly and paid his tenths strictly. In fact, he was what would now be called a strict Jew. He was at the top of the religious scale, and the poor publican who stood some way off was at the bottom. But there was something in this poor man which reached the heart of that God to Whom they both spoke. He stood remote. He dared not look up. He acknowledged that his heart was sin-stained as he smote upon his breast, and he gave utterance to words which he may have learnt from Psalm xli. 4: "Lord, be merciful unto me; heal my soul; for I have sinned against Thee." What was the upshot of their prayers? What was the verdict of God upon the two men? One He viewed afar off; the other He regarded as righteous; and the words of chapter xiv. 11 are repeated and driven home into the hearts of the hearers. There is really nothing new in them. They constitute one of the laws of the Kingdom. But they are hard to take in.

Chapter xix. 11 (compare Matt. xxv. 14;

Mark xiii. 34). The Lord was on His way up from Jericho, and men thought that the Kingdom of God would immediately appear. They were still set on some external manifestation, and their eyes seemed closed to spiritual realities. The Lord sets forth the parable of the Pounds. The nobleman goes off to receive a Kingdom (from the Head of the Empire) and to return. His citizens do not want him, and send a message to that effect. Meanwhile, his agents are trusted with certain money, with which they were to trade. With this money they traffic, with various results, and according to their diligence positions of trust are assigned to them in the Kingdom on the return of their Master. The lazy and impertinent one gets nothing. His case comes under the great law of the spiritual Kingdom (chap. viii. 18), "To him that hath (i.e. uses what he has) shall be given, whilst from him who hath not shall be taken what he thinks he has." But what of the discontented citizens? They are brought forth and slain. All this would seem natural enough in ordinary civil life in those days, but what did it teach? Evidently it had to do with the anticipated Kingdom of God. The King might not yet come into His own. Some who ought to be His subjects would rise against Him in their

animosity. His own special followers would not be all faithful to their trust. The future in each case would depend on the present.

Chapter xx. 9 (compare Matt. xxi. 35 ; Mark xii. 1). The Lord is spending his last precious days in teaching the people in the Temple courts. His enemies, the Priests and scribes and Elders, are on the watch to catch Him tripping, and in their hearing He addresses Himself to the listening throng. A man plants a vineyard ; he lets it out to others and goes away for a long time, but at the season for grapes he sends his agent for the fruit which he had a right to expect. The husbandmen beat him and send him off once again. The owner then sends his dear son. They kill him, that the inheritance may be theirs. The result is what would be expected, The husbandmen are destroyed and the vineyard is given to others.

What was the teaching ? The hostile party perceived that the Lord knew the animosity which was smouldering in their hearts, and that they, the recognized Teachers of Israel, were acting unfaithfully and rebelliously, as their fathers had done (Acts vii. 52). They were in the way of destruction. They were rejecting the Stone Whose righteousness they ought to

have recognized. But others would be put in trust of the vineyard, and the Stone should become the head of the corner. One of the hearers on that occasion remembered later what the Lord had said, and interpreted it rightly (Acts iv. 11 ; 1 Pet. ii. 7, 8).

Altogether, Luke gives fifteen of the Lord's parables. They are mainly practical, and teach the way of God and encourage men to repentance and prayer. They show the preciousness of life and the responsibility of being in a position of trust as a teacher, and they bind up the present with the future, some being of a distinctly prophetic character.

Though in perfect harmony with all other elements in the Lord's teaching, in some respects they stand alone. There was nothing like them before or after. No apostle or disciple attempted to imitate them. They are, strictly speaking, post-Judaic and pre-Christian, both in style and in doctrine, being exactly adapted to the transition stage in which the Lord was ministering; yet they were so worded as to be profitable for practical purposes through all the ages which should follow. (See § 17.)

§ 14. Circumstantial Teaching

Much of the Lord's teaching springs out of

the circumstances of the day. Everything was turned to account by Him. St. Luke gives several instances :—

Chapter v. 27. Levi's feast leads to the announcement of the Lord's mission to sinners (compare Matt. ix. 13).

Chapter vii. 19. The deputation from John the Baptist draws forth a beatitude for those who are not offended, and also brings out an important distinction between the high position of John and the still more exalted position of him "that is least in the Kingdom of God" (compare Matt. xi. 7).

Chapter vii. 36. The tender ministrations of an erring but contrite woman draw out the similitude of the debtors, the influence of love over life, and the Lord's faculty of observing not only the outward actions, but the inner thoughts.

Chapter viii. 19. The message concerning the Lord's mother and brethren calls out the remarkable utterance concerning those who hear the Word of God and do it, and thus clinches the teaching of the preceding parable

of the sower (compare Matt. xii. 46; Mark iii. 31).

Chapter ix. 18. The various views which people expressed concerning the Lord, open the way for Peter's confession, and so for the announcement of the death and resurrection of the Son of Man, and of the prospect before those who confessed Him and those who were ashamed of Him (compare Matt. xvi. 13; Mark viii. 27).

Chapter ix. 46. The contention as to who should be greatest does not escape the notice of the Thought-reader. He takes a child, and plants a lesson from this living text, not only on true greatness, but on the preciousness of young lives in God's sight (compare Matt. xviii. 1; Mark ix. 33); see also Matthew x. 40; Luke x. 16; John xii. 44 and xiii. 20, for a still deeper lesson on the relationship between our attitude to the Son and our reception of the Father.

Chapter x. 20. The joy of the seventy on finding even the demons subject to them through the name of Jesus, leads to an utterance concerning the downfall of Satan and concerning the true subject for joy; and this leads to the

Lord's solemn expression of thanks to His Father, "the possessor of heaven and earth" (Gen. xiv. 19) for the special method of revelation of Himself through the Son to those to whom the Son willeth to reveal Him—the simple people of the day being better off than kings and prophets of old (compare Matt. xi. 25 ; xiii. 16 ; *see* also 1 Cor. i. 27, 28 ; 1 Pet. i. 10).

Chapter x. 41. The complaint of busy Martha leads to the reminder that amidst the cares of life one thing was really needful. It is the hearing the words, i.e. the teaching, of Jesus.

Chapter xi. 14 (compare Matt. ix. 32 ; xii. 22 ; Mark iii. 22). The deliverance of a possessed man, together with the foolish suggestion that it was done through Beelzebub, calls forth an important declaration concerning the action of the finger of God (*see* Exod. viii. 19) and the arrival of the Kingdom of God, and the need of loyal adherence to God's representative.

Chapter xii. 41. A simple and natural question asked by Peter opens the way for an important utterance concerning stewardship, the nature of which is illustrated by a similitude concerning master and servant, reward and

punishment being ordinarily allotted according to a servant's opportunities and knowledge.

Chapter xiii. 31. A message (possibly concocted) concerning Herod led to a remarkable utterance concerning the Lord's movements, and to an apostrophe on Jerusalem—apparently repeated on another occasion—concerning the coming desolation of the city, and a brighter hope beyond.

Chapter xvii. 7. The risk attendant on the offending "little ones" and the law of forgiveness between brethren, are linked in Matthew xviii. with a shortened form of the parable of the lost sheep. Then comes the striking plea of the apostles for an increase of faith, with the strong and twice-repeated answer (compare Matt. xvii. 20; xxi. 21; Mark ix. 25; xi. 25). But this leads to another lesson: No one was to presume that the work of faith was his own. Its exercise in the Master's service was a simple duty, and not to be boasted of.

Chapter xvii. 20. The important and natural question concerning the Kingdom of God, i.e. the re-establishment of the true Israelite Theocracy, elicited the answer that the Kingdom

was to be realized within rather than to be looked for without; it would not be restricted by narrow local limits; its manifestation would be preceded by the suffering and rejection of the Son of Man; the world would be going on as usual, when suddenly a crisis would arise. Meanwhile, men must pray and not faint, confident that God would vindicate His people in His own time and way.

Chapter xviii. 15. Infants come on the scene. The disciples are shocked; but the Lord grants a charter to the little ones (Matt. xix. 13; Mark x. 13). They had a very real qualification for the Kingdom. Perhaps some light is shown on this teaching by the incident which follows.

Chapter xviii. 18. The Ruler wants to know how he is to get eternal life. The practical answer was that he was to follow Jesus, revising his view of goodness, and getting rid of every impediment.

Chapter xix. 9. We find a message of salvation for sinners connected with the Lord's visit to the house of Zacchæus (Zacchai).

Chapter xx. 19. The Master gives a call to

render what is due to God, arising out of the questioning of the Priests and scribes (compare Matt. xxii. 15).

Chapter xx. 34. In answer to a question, we find the important utterance concerning the life beyond the grave, and also the condition of the Resurrection body (compare Matt. xxii. 23 ; Mark xii. 18).

Chapter xxi. 4. Lastly, there is the teaching concerning the spirit of the offerer (compare Mark xii. 43), springing out of the widow's generous deed ; whilst the important prophecy which follows is prompted by expressions of admiration at the goodly stones and gifts in the Temple courts.

§ 15. Direct Teaching

Besides the occasional teaching which Luke thus gives us, there are samples of the Lord's more formal teaching, apparently not arising from the circumstance of the moment.

First, the instructions which Matthew puts together in what we usually call the Sermon on the Mount, Luke gives us in portions.

Chapter vi. 20–49 records the Lord's address

to His apostles and disciples on high table-land in the presence of an immense company of people from all parts of the country. He teaches the nature of the Kingdom, the secret of true happiness, the spirit in which persecution is to be borne, the power of love, and the necessity of carrying out into daily life the principles which we believe in.

Chapter xi. gives the Lord's instructions on Prayer (compare Matt. vi.), on Light (compare Matt. v. 15), on the error of formal Pharisaism (compare Matt. xxiii. 20 ; Mark vii. 5), and on the culmination of evil in that generation (compare Matt. xxiii. 29, etc.).

Chapter xii. 22–34. This passage is to be compared with Matthew vi. 20–24. God was to be trusted as a Father. Care was to be cast on Him.

Secondly, the instructions for His followers, which Matthew groups together (Matt. x. 5, etc.), Luke divides into two portions, one for the Twelve (ix. 1, etc.), and the other for the Seventy (x. 2, etc.). The first portion is very short and for the needs of the day, one clause being definitely rescinded in later days (compare ix. 3 with xxii. 35). The business of these twelve

missionaries was to preach the Kingdom of God, the nature of which Jesus had already taught them, and to heal the sick. The work of the Seventy was also strictly preparatory, for the Lord was about to follow them through the towns and villages, of which there were hundreds in Galilee. It was a long, responsible task, perhaps a year's work. He gives them all needful instructions of a very solemn kind and arms them with authority. They also were to preach the Kingdom of God—doubtless not in a political but in a spiritual sense, as the Lord Himself had been doing in their hearing.

§ 16. The Lord's Use of the Old Testament

The Books of the New Testament are impregnated with words, phrases, ideas, incidents, reminiscences, quotations taken from the Old. High authority is attributed to them by the Lord and His followers, just as the later contributors to the Old Testament quoted the earlier writers as works of authority. The texts were grouped together and interpreted in a new way by the Lord; in fact, He may be said to have inaugurated a new school of interpretation which may be favourably compared with the Talmudic schools, being more spiritual, practical, and direct.

The doctrine of the Messiah, or coming King of the House of David, was firmly established among the Judeans, the Galileans, and even the Samaritans, though it was not easy for anyone to draw out a programme of the events which should follow His manifestation. Men knew that the blessing promised to Abraham was yet to be fulfilled, that a Prophet like Moses was to be raised up, that a King of the seed of David should reign in righteousness, and that there was a great destiny for Israel. These things were clear from their Scriptures.

The Lord's appeals to the Old Testament are frequent and very instructive. They occur, not in Luke's narrative, but in the Lord's own teaching, which Luke reports. The following are the most important passages :—

Chapter iv. 16. The Lord reads part of Isaiah lxi. in the Synagogue at Nazareth and applies it to Himself. In His address He reminds them of events recorded in the Book of Kings which happened in the days of Elijah and Elisha.

Chapter v. 14. He orders that the ritual commanded by Moses for the cleansing of the leper should be carried out.

Chapter vi. 3. An act of David is claimed as sufficient precedent for the act of His own disciples in rubbing the corn with their hands on the Sabbath.

Chapter vii. 27. The Prophecy of Malachi is claimed as fulfilled in the mission of John the Baptist.

Chapter viii. 10. A notable passage in Isaiah vi. is quoted to show the method of the Divine dealings with the hardened and inattentive.

Chapter xi. 29, etc. The narratives concerning Jonah and the Queen of Sheba are cited as contrasts with the present condition of the Jewish mind.

Chapter xii. 53. A passage from Micah illustrates the troubles consequent on the mission of the Lord.

There are also references to the Patriarchs (xiii. 28), to the Law and the Prophets (xvi. 29), to Noah and Lot (xvii. 26), to passages from Isaiah and Jeremiah concerning God's House (xix. 46), to the 118th Psalm, and perhaps to the 2nd of Daniel concerning the Stone (xx. 17, 18), to the vision granted to Moses at the Bush (xx. 37), to the 110th Psalm concerning the expected

Messiah (xx. 41, 42), and to the Messianic programme (xxii. 37, 69 ; xxiv. 26, 27, 41, 46). It is specially observable that what we call the Messianic passages had mainly to do with the Lord's atoning death and resurrection, and that they could not possibly be referred to or argued about in the earlier days of His ministry. In fact, it is not easy to point to many texts which spoke of His earthly ministrations, though there were a few, specially the passage in Isaiah xli. referred to above.

§ 17. The Lord's Teaching Pre-Christian

Taking a view of the Lord's teaching as a whole in comparison with that of the Old Testament on the one side and of the Letters on the other, it is impossible to avoid being struck by its intermediate position. It is post-Judaic, but pre-Christian. It is rooted in the Old Testament, but it is not yet the expression of full-blown Christianity. It is partly of the nature of a *renaissance* of the teaching of the Law and the Prophets, a re-publication of central truths, and a clearing away of superimposed traditionalism and formalism. As we read it with Jewish eyes and in the light of the age, we can well understand its attractive influence on the people, and also the opposition which

it aroused. But there was something yet to be done before the Lord's teaching could receive its completeness. His mission upon earth was not yet fulfilled. What was to happen next? Was He to go on living in the land year after year, going about doing good and healing all that were oppressed by the devil, until He reached an extreme old age? Would He die at all? or was He to reign over the Twelve Tribes for ever? In case He should prove to be the hoped-for King or Messiah, what was to be expected? and how far did His teaching fall in with such expectation?

He spoke certain mysterious words about Himself and about His followers, about His nation and about Jerusalem, and these must have made all feel that something grave was impending, and that after it was accomplished a new chapter of His teaching would be added. In other words, His sovereignty over the hearts of men, whether Jew or Gentile, largely depended on His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem. Then it was to be, after He had tasted death and drunk the cup to the bitter dregs, that Christianity would become a world-power and that the Kingdom of God and of righteousness would be established in all lands. In this, as in other senses, the Cross prepared the

way for the Crown, and for the world-wide Mission.

It is important to emphasize the pre-Christian nature of the Lord's teaching, because it brings to the front the fact that Christ Himself is the true "Source" of the Gospels, and that the Spirit of God brought all things to the remembrance of the evangelists. No late disciples could have fabricated the parables and other words of the Lord Jesus; and many things are missing in the Gospels which shine out in the Epistles. The word Hope, for example, never so much as occurs in Christ's teaching in the Gospels, though it is to be found in almost every Letter as a characteristic of the Christian. The same is true of the word Saints. So it is with the way of Pardon and Access; and it was not till the night in which He was betrayed that the promise concerning the Holy Ghost assumed a definite form.

§ 18. The Lord Claims to be Believed

During His earthly ministrations the Lord constantly demanded Faith and called for loyal submission to His claims. This demand became more pressing as His ministry extended.

Faith in Him included, and was based on, a full conviction of the truth of God as revealed in

the Scriptures of the Prophets. It also meant personal confidence in Jesus and His word, for He claimed to speak and act as One commissioned from heaven, and His "word of the Kingdom" was God's word (viii. 10–12).

There were degrees in faith, as in knowledge. The disciples sometimes had very little, but the Centurion had much (vii. 9). It was capable of growth like a grain of mustard, and it could do great things because ultimately it laid hold upon God Himself. It was the secret of health and peace and salvation. At times it was sorely tried. The Lord once prayed for the most prominent and impulsive of His followers that His faith should not utterly fail, and the prayer was answered. From the beginning faith was to be both receptive and active, but those who exercised it had little idea what it would involve in later days. The more they learnt of the Master's mission, the greater would be the demand on their fidelity. The Letters, in this respect, are much more clear as to the nature of Christian faith than the Gospels—as was natural, inasmuch as the Gospels represent a transition period so far as teaching is concerned.

What were the claims which the Lord expected His followers to believe?

They already believed in God and in the Scriptures, and in many cases they had come under the influence of John and had been baptized to signify their repentance and their belief in the remission of sins as an act of Divine grace.

They called the Lord by His name, Jesus. They knew Him also as the Son of Man, though they do not appear to have used the title. He was their Teacher, or Rabbi, and their Lord or Master. They would submit to His decision and do His bidding. They recognized His healing power, His knowledge and His insight, and under His guidance they began to read life, human and divine, with new eyes, especially if they were among the closest of His companions. To these He was a Prophet sent by God, and to some He was the Christ, the Son of God. Hundreds stuck to Him in all parts of Galilee, and latterly in Judea, during his ministrations ; but the shock of His condemnation and crucifixion left them in utter bewilderment. They had been hoping that He would have redeemed Israel, in other words, that He was the promised Christ ; now, apparently, He was not. Their hopes were blasted. They were of all men most pitiable. But their sorrow was soon turned into joy, though even when the news of His resurrec-

tion was followed by a manifestation to above five hundred brethren at once, their views were very vague. It was not until the great event recorded by Luke in the second chapter of the Acts that they saw things clearly and in their true perspective, though even then they bore the stamp of Judaism on their conduct, as we see in the tenth chapter.

§ 19. The Lord's Character

No estimate of the Lord's teaching can be complete without an inquiry into His character, so far as it could be judged at the time. Did He live as He taught?

We have to bear in mind that the Lord was not a recluse. He mixed with all sorts of people and was much in public, though His nights were often sacred to prayer. He was surrounded by His personal followers, and they gradually grew up into a considerable company of men and women, some of whom ministered to Him of their substance. He was by no means tied to one place or to one set of people, or to His relations. He was frequently on the move. Every one had access to Him, and though at times He avoided publicity lest it should lead either to premature violence or to a nationalist uprising in His favour, anyone who wished

might approach Him, might seek His help and advice, or might criticize His views and proceedings.

Under these circumstances it became possible to form some judgment of His disposition and character and to compare His teaching with His actions.

It must be noticed that the Lord by no means put Himself on a level with those whom He taught. There was a strange detachment about Him. Others were evil-doers, hypocrites, sinners; others needed repentance; but He never classed Himself with them by using the first person plural. Morally and spiritually, there was a gulf fixed between Himself and His followers. When the great crisis rose which Luke describes in chapter xxii. 39, etc., there is not an indication of an evil conscience or of failure in His mission. On the contrary, there is a complete yielding afresh of His will to His Father's, in full view of the cost.

If we look at the leading precepts which He enunciated, and at the laws of His Father's Kingdom which He laid down, we shall find them generally included under such principles as meekness, gentleness, long-suffering, disinterestedness, faithfulness, courage, decision, generosity, sympathy, and the love of children—

and all in glad subordination to the Father. Let any student of Luke's narrative consider and observe how far the Lord's character stands unimpeached when measured by these graces. Other characteristics are to be noticed in Him, e.g. His reverent and yet familiar attitude towards God His Father, Whom He regards as specially His own (never adopting the words "*Our Father*," which He taught others to use); His calmness amidst the multiplicity of burdens laid on Him, also His wisdom and readiness to reply to adversaries.

The Lord's contemporaries, in forming an estimate of His character, would naturally consider Him in the light of the attributes of God and the way of righteousness prescribed in the Old Testament and illustrated in the life of such men as Moses, Samuel or Daniel. Or they might consider what they knew of the Priest Zechariah and his wife Elizabeth, who "were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments of the Lord blameless." Or, best of all, they would live in the Lord's company, see how He behaved in the various circumstances of life, look at His face, hear His words, mark His willingness to receive and help others, observe Him amid the emergencies and straits and difficulties which beset His

daily path, stand by when men sought to catch Him tripping and set snares in His path. They could judge far better than we who only have the records of His friends; our records, however, impress us with a sense of their fairness and candour. They do not hide the imperfections of the disciples. Why, then, should they conceal the defects in the Master, if there were any? They certainly tell us of His severity as well as of His goodness. Sometimes this severity is intended to teach a lesson, as in the case of the swine, and of the barren fig-tree. Sometimes severity is stamped upon His parables and on His direct teaching. Sometimes He looked round about Him with anger, being grieved with the hardness of men's hearts, the oppressiveness of their conduct, and the hollowness of their religion. But in these, and in all other respects, the Lord was standing for His Father's righteousness and was neither asserting Himself nor avenging Himself. He had the interests of others at heart rather than His own, nor must it be forgotten that His insight and foresight brought a heavy burden of sorrow to Him. He saw not only the surface of evil, but its depths, and regarded it in its true colours, but He was immune from its contagion and emerged unscathed by its pollu-

tion. He was the same holy, sinless Being to the end. Men detected no sin, no failure, no victory of the flesh over the spirit, no self-pleasing or self-will. He was tempted, suspected, abused, laughed at, misinterpreted, insulted, mocked, struck, scourged, crucified, and—even after that—reviled. He was conscious of it all and sensitive to it all, but remained loyal to His Father throughout, learning short and sharp lessons of obedience by the things which He suffered.

It has often been noticed that His character involved a series of opposite excellencies. He was self-possessed but not cold, an enthusiast for His Father's honour but no fanatic, unconventional but not eccentric, authoritative but meek, strong but sympathetic, ideal but natural, adaptive but firm.

It is observable that neither Luke nor his contemporary recorders aim at depicting the Lord's character. They are simply telling us how He spoke and acted, and they leave us to draw our own conclusions. We only have graphic memoirs covering fragments of a brief ministry, with no comments and no rhetorical notes of admiration. Even in the most dramatic parts of the narrative there is no invective, no appeal to the feeling. The facts are eloquent enough, and they are left to speak for them-

selves. The writers keep in the background. They do not even give a review or summary at the end, but leave us to consider Him in all His aspects. Can we see Divine love in the story? Can we see whole-hearted self-sacrifice (the nature of which was not fully understood at the time)? Do we see moral victory over evil? Can we detect golden silence as well as silver speech, especially when the Lord was brought before His judges? At times one is tempted to ask with regard to these men, Were they judging Him? or was He judging them? The contrast presented is as that of light compared with darkness.

While Luke often refers to the wonder produced in the heart of those who saw the Lord's mighty works, he rarely refers to His moral influence. We are permitted, however, to read of two impressions produced on human hearts during the last scene. One is the case of a culprit; the other of an official. One says, "This man hath done nothing amiss"; the other, "Certainly this was a righteous man" (xxiii. 41, 47). Were they right or were they wrong in these utterances?

§ 20. The Lord's Rejection

Some of the Lord's contemporaries, however,

by no means accepted the view of the Lord's character thus sketched out. They were the religious teachers and clergy of the day. These suspected Him from the first. They regarded Him as an impostor. They could not deny that He did mighty works, but they attributed some of them to an evil influence. They were wedded to the *minutiæ* of traditional legalism, and hated anyone who exposed the falsity of their system. They never seriously considered His claims as a Prophet and Servant of God. They did not know that He was born in Bethlehem and simply regarded Him as a Nazarene, so that the idea of His being the Christ was at once put out of court. Many, also, who at first were inclined to receive Him were afterwards repelled by His hard sayings. Their prejudices against the admission of Gentiles to sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the Kingdom of God were very strong, and the idea that the children of the Kingdom should be cast out was utterly repugnant. His exposition of the true law of the Sabbath, of alms-giving, and of heart-cleansing, embittered them. They had plenty of zeal, but it ran in a groove in the direction of self-righteousness and hypocrisy, and their hearts were hardened, as they had been in the days of Isaiah. At last

they could bear no more. They resolved to kill Him, for He was becoming too popular; and the way was unexpectedly opened; nor did they rest till they had secured His condemnation, legally or illegally, by the ecclesiastical and civil authorities. His crucifixion followed.

§ 26. The Lord's Death and Resurrection

It has already been noticed that Luke does not give a full account of the Lord's journeys, though he refers to one (chap. viii. 1). His notes of time are rare. Sometimes the Authorized Version adds to our difficulty, as in chapter iv. 30, 31, which reads: "He, passing through the midst of them, went His way, and came down to Capernaum." There ought to be a full stop after "went his way," and the word "He" should be inserted before "came down." The Revisers have corrected this mistake. Sometimes the text of ancient MSS. raises a difficulty, as in chapter iv. 44, where for "the synagogues of Galilee," the oldest authorities read, "the synagogues of Judea" (see margin of R.V.). Ordinarily, Luke avoids marks of consecutive order, following a line of his own, but occasionally we find, "after these things" (v. 27; x. 1), "in those days" (vi. 12), "afterward" (viii. 2), "on a certain day" (viii. 21),

"when alone praying" (ix. 18; xi. 1), "eight days after" (ix. 28), "the next day" (v. 37), "as they went" (v. 57; x. 38), "as He spake" (xi. 27, 37), "in the meantime" (xii. 1), "at that season" (xiii. 1), "as He went to Jerusalem" (xvii. 11).

But all this is altered when we get to the final scene. Details are given in fairly consecutive order. The Lord draws near Jericho (xviii. 35), ascends the ridge past Bethany, beholds the City and laments over it, enters the Temple courts and teaches daily, abiding by night amidst the olives in the valley. Then comes the Passover, with last instructions, the renewed self-dedication to the Father, the apprehension, the preliminary hearing in the High Priest's house, the morning gathering of the Council, the charge before Pilate and before Herod (Antipas), the gathering of all the Jewish representatives before Pilate, their violent demands and his decision. The actual crucifixion, with its attendant circumstances, is followed by an important note of time: "It was about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour, and the sun was darkened." Another cry rang out through the darkness, and then the Lord committed His spirit to His Father in trustful words which

would take the hearers back to Psalm xxxi. 5 : "Into Thy hand I commend my Spirit ; Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of Truth " (*see* 1 Pet. ii. 23).

The contrast between Luke's detailed historical treatment of this section of his work and his mode of dealing with the previous ministrations is very significant, and it is the more so because in his remaining chapter he reverts to some extent to his earlier method. It was evidently of the utmost importance that Theophilus and all other Christians should have a clear consecutive account of the charges brought against Jesus, of the grounds which finally led to His crucifixion, and of the spirit in which He endured the cross ; but it was not equally necessary that they should have full details concerning the forty days which followed.

The Preparation day (i.e. the day before the Sabbath) comes to a close : the Sabbath dawns : the day passes : the first day of the week opens : some women, three of whom are named, come to render the last offices of love to the Master Whose body had been reverently laid in the rock-hewn grave. Nothing was further from their expectation than what actually happened. The grave is empty. Two heavenly visitors tell that the Lord is risen

and remind them of words spoken by Him in Galilee. They hurry to tell others, but their words seem too good to be true, though Peter runs off to see.

Later in the day "Jesus Himself" joins the two going to Emmaus. Subsequently, He was made known to them in breaking of bread. They hurry back to tell the Eleven and others who were gathered with them, and whilst they were talking, "Jesus Himself" stood in the midst of them and enabled them to identify Him. Luke does not describe all which followed, but by comparing his second record (Acts i.), we see that the first conversation, of which we only have a condensed account, must have broken off at the end of the 45th verse. A period of about forty days follows, and then comes the Blessing, the parting, and the Ascension.

VI

THE OTHER THREE GOSPELS

§ 1. St. Matthew's Gospel

IF we only had Luke's narrative we should have enough to give us an outline of the words and works of the Lord Jesus. But we have three other narratives, all written in the same generation, and two of them going over the same ground. We have already inserted, for purposes of comparison, the chief references to the Lord's life and teaching obtainable from these sources so far as they are practically identical with Luke.

Taking Matthew's Gospel first, we find that he goes over the same ground as Luke. He presents the same Jesus with the same characteristics, but with a slightly different order of events and with occasional changes of expression. The Lord is regarded as the Messiah, the true Baptist, the Pardoner of sinners, the conqueror of Satan, the spiritual legislator, and the founder of a new Community. Matthew

alone among New Testament writers speaks of the "Kingdom of Heaven" instead of the "Kingdom of God," referring to it thirty-three times. He contrasts the laws of Moses with the traditions of Pharisaism and what would now be called Talmudism. The Lord's teaching as recorded by Matthew is pre-Christian (see p. 136), and belonged to a transition age. It is thus a Memoir, not a product of full-blown Christianity. It is steeped in Messianic teaching, and refers to about seventy passages of the Old Testament, some of which are cited by the Evangelist and some by the Lord Himself. It is primarily and distinctly a message for the House of Israel and, perhaps, specially for the Northern Tribes.

Who was the writer? When was the Book written? and in what language was it originally composed?

All the Gospels are, strictly speaking, anonymous, and we have to depend on external sources for the names of their writers. In this respect they differ from the Letters. But ancient tradition is for once agreed as to the names of all the Four Evangelists; Matthew stands first among them, and it is clear from the most ancient authorities extant that he wrote in Hebrew, i.e., the Hebrew of his time,

which it is the fashion to call Aramaic. So says Papias, who wrote early in the second century, and so say Irenæus and Origen, who wrote a little later; and the great scholar Jerome (Fourth Century) adds that the Hebrew original "is found to this day in the library at Cæsarea." The earliest accounts add that Matthew (Mattathias) was the same as Levi the Publican.

Guided by this ancient testimony, we look again at our Gospel. The writer may have been awakened by John the Baptist's preaching; then he must have come under the influence of the Lord; at last he becomes an adherent, and then a missionary, forsaking his secular calling at the word of Jesus (Matt. ix. 9; x. 3).

It was natural that when it seemed good to him to write he should use his own dialect. It rested for others to translate it (into Greek) as best they could. So says Papias. The same thing had been done in the case of the Septuagint, long before, and no one knows the names of the Greek translators of the Old Testament. The original work of Matthew may have been completed some time before a translation was made. It is conceivable that we may even yet recover some portions of this Galilean Gospel (which we must not con-

fuse with the apocryphal Gospel according to Hebrews); meanwhile, we have every reason to believe that our Greek version represents Matthew's own work; in fact, it may have been translated or authorized by him; certainly it has been quoted in all subsequent ages as an authoritative document, and with that we must remain content at present.

The Book contains two classes of Notes. There are such passages as chapter xvi. 12 and xvii. 13. One refers to the subsequent understanding of the disciples about the leaven of the Pharisees, which they had misunderstood at first; the other has to do with their understanding about Elijah and John the Baptist. The other notes are in chapters xxvii. 8 and xxviii. 15. The first is a reference to the field which is called the Field of Blood "until this day." The second has to do with a saying concerning the stealing of the Lord's body, which was current "until this day." These notes may have been fairly early. They remind us of similar notes in the Old Testament.

The impression produced on the mind of the student who absorbs this Gospel, reading it many times as a whole and digesting its contents section by section, is that the Jesus of St. Matthew is the Jesus of St. Luke, and that

these writers are independent, or at least semi-independent, witnesses to the mission of the Lord, one being an original follower and eye-witness, and speaking with authority as having been chosen by the Master, the other having received his information from eyewitnesses, and being by nature and training a man who may be trusted.

Note on the "Hebrew" of our Lord's time

In an essay on the Hebrew New Testament by Prof. Franz Delitzsch (1883, Leipzig) it is pointed out that Matthew wrote in true Hebrew, not in the Aramaic dialect of Palestine. The same, he says, was the case with the Hebrew referred to in Acts xxi. 40 ; xxii. 2 and xxvi. 14. It was the language of Temple worship and of Synagogue prayer. It is interesting to learn that the new Arts and Crafts Society of Jerusalem, named after Bezalel, is adopting pure Hebrew for all purposes and rejecting "Yiddish."

§ 2. St. Mark's Gospel

If it had fallen to the lot of the most conspicuous of the Lord's missionaries, St. Peter, to write a narrative of the life-work of his Master, and if that narrative, which might have

been in his mother tongue, was reproduced in Greek, we should look for the result in Mark's Gospel.

Papias, who was born in the first century, calls Mark the interpreter, that is, the translator, of Peter. So also says Irenæus: "Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, transmitted to us in writing what had been preached by him" (i.e. by Peter). Peter's speech to Cornelius and his friends, in Acts x., is sometimes called Mark's Gospel in a nutshell. Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, and others, including Eusebius, the historian, take this view of Mark's Gospel, and as there is no evidence to the contrary, we are justified in regarding this Gospel as Peter's Memoir.

Mark had a Hebrew name, but he was more generally known by his Latin name. His connexion with Barnabas, and the fact that his home was an early Christian meeting-place to which Peter went after his delivery from prison, show that he was in touch with the Pioneers, and they prepare the way for his missionary work recorded later. If he was Peter's son (in the faith), who is so spoken of in 1 Pet. v. 13—and we have no reason to doubt it—we can readily understand why he should be employed to "interpret" Peter's

Gospel. The Memoir is full of personal notes, and thus illustrates the Lord's compassion, His power of rebuke, His tact, His discernment, His anger and grief, and His very "look" (*see* chap. v. 32; x. 21, 23, 27). For notes and reflections, *see* vi. 52; vii. 2, 11, 19, 34; ix. 6; x. 46; xi. 13.

Apart, however, from the question of authorship, this Gospel stands on its own merits as presenting to us an eyewitness' view of the Lord Jesus. Though the shortest and most condensed of the Gospels, it is the most graphic, and abounds with small detailed touches. It agrees with Luke's message, and with Matthew's also, in the general outline of the ministry, and sometimes it is more full, as may be seen by examining Mark's 6th, 7th, 10th, 12th and 14th chapters.

It is the gospel of active service (but never in Jerusalem till we reach the end of His ministry), and is written for busy men who were of Gentile rather than Jewish origin, and it contains few quotations from the Old Testament, not even naming "the law." Its date is probably between A.D. 60 and 70—certainly not later than 70. The portrait is the same Jesus, but in a slightly different frame. Its Latinisms would make it specially acceptable to Christians

living in the Imperial city. It abounds with present and imperfect tenses.

It ought to be mentioned, not only of this Gospel but of all the Gospels, that the words of the Lord are usually given not "obliquely" but "directly," that is to say, they are given as they were actually spoken, and not merely referred to in the third person as part of the writer's record.[1] This adds extraordinary force to the Memoirs, and it accounts for the mode in which Early Christians quoted them—not as "Matthew or Mark said," but as "the Lord said."

§ 3. St. John's Gospel

This Memoir is so different from the other three and so remarkable in itself that it calls for the most careful attention. We must first determine its authorship, if possible, by an examination of the Book itself. It should be added that a consideration of early testimony on the subject[2] has become increasingly convincing as years have gone on that it is the

[1] Sometimes the oblique slides into the direct, as in Acts i. 4, 5.

[2] For a full discussion as to the authorship of the Fourth Gospel, the Treatise by Dr. Drummond is specially worth study.

work of St. John. The writer calls himself the disciple whom Jesus loved, and was evidently on terms of deepest intimacy with the Lord. He never uses the word Apostle (i.e. missionary) with reference to the Twelve, but we have every reason to rank him among them. He is frequently associated with Peter, and he is a fisherman, and can judge distance by water (vi. 19 and xxi. 8). If he was one of the Lord's three intimates, as he could not be Peter, who is referred to by him, or James, who died early, he must have been John. If so, he was of godly parentage, of a somewhat fiery disposition—a son of thunder—probably a disciple of the Baptist, and so led to Jesus, possibly permitted to remain with the Lord when others were absent, e.g. during the interviews with Nicodemus and with the Samaritan woman, and he was put in charge of the Lord's mother at the time of the Crucifixion (Joseph having died and the "brethren and sisters" being passed over).

We find him associated with Paul on an important occasion (Gal. ii. 9), and still at Jerusalem. Afterwards (Mary having died) he seems to have settled at Ephesus, whence he was banished to Patmos. At Ephesus his autograph or authorized Gospel was long kept, according to the testimony of Peter, Bishop of

Alexandria, who lived towards the end of the third century, and who refers to this interesting fact in his Paschal discourse.

John, whose authorship is now to be taken for granted, shows certain signs of independence as compared with the other three Evangelists and that not only in the use of words, substituting "similitudes" for parables, "signs" for miracles, and "disciples" for apostles, but giving the Judean and Samaritan rather than the Galilean record, confining himself largely to the Lord's conversations and to the criticism which He provoked, dealing with the subject of belief, but, as it happens, never using the word "faith" in the Gospel (though we find it once in his Epistle). The Lord Jesus is in John's eyes not only Son of God and Son of Man, but the Word, the self-revelation of the Father, and brings light, truth, life, salvation to the children of men, whether Israel or non-Israel; but they must come, believe, receive, eat, drink (i.e. appropriate) the message, or rather, the Messenger. He represents the Most High, yet bears the marks of manhood at every turn. The Kingdom which He came to establish was one of Truth based on Divine love, and showing itself in human love, of which His own love was the ideal. If we had not John's

Gospel we should miss much; the same must be said of his First Epistle, which is a practical application of his Gospel. Chapters xiii.–xvii. have no parallel in the other Gospels. They admit us into the sacred presence of the Son, calm and confident, loving His own to the end, and just about to fight his last battle with the Prince of this world.

John's Gospel abounds in explanatory Notes, which call for careful study. If it is not a complete record of the Lord's work, it often refers to that work, and implies many journeys and much labour, and contains at least one important date (*see* chap. ii. 20). He gives us reminiscences and reflections in a style peculiar to himself, and is a theologian rather than a historian. Although his narrative is frequently supplementary to the other Gospels, this hardly seems to be his purpose; but we should have known little of the Lord's Judean ministrations without it, nor should we have understood so clearly the causes which led the Jewish authorities to neglect His claims. The Book has been called by the strange title of *The Gospel of the Rejection*.[1] This expression may seem

[1] See Mr. Richmond's work under this title, published by Murray; compare *The Fourth Gospel and the Synoptists*, by F. W. Worsley (Clark).

to be an exaggeration, but it serves to bring out a striking characteristic of the Book, and it points to the restraining and overruling power of God, Who carried out His purpose through the Word, step by step, from the Incarnation to the Glorification.

It is thought that John was the youngest of the Twelve, and that he may have caught something of His Master's style and retained some of the Lord's. striking expressions, such as the double "verily, verily," and other reiterations, so necessary in a teacher, with the semi-poetic balancing of sentences and the utterance of Truth in its positive and negative aspects. His references to Jewish customs, and other explanatory words are to be noticed, also the mention of the mother of Jesus, of Joseph, and of the Lord's brethren.

§ 4. The Four Gospels as a Whole

The Four Gospels, though issued independently and circulated at first in different quarters, gradually found their way into the same hands. Each was felt to be a work of authority and to contribute something to the picture of the living Lord which every Christian wanted to possess in his soul. They were eagerly compared one with another, their differences of

arrangement and of wording were noticed by friends and, subsequently, by foes, e.g. on the one hand by Julius Africanus and on the other by Celsus.

In the whole history of ancient literature there had probably never been such a phenomenon as the existence of four semi-independent and fairly contemporary memoirs of one Person. This Person proves to be Jewish in His earthly origin, and living in public for only three or four years, but world-wide in His influence for good, and that not only because of His teaching, but because of His life, death, resurrection, and the transmission of His Spirit. What every Christian wanted to know in later days was whether the Lord Jesus was to be loved, trusted and followed ; and in order to be assured of this, he must have, not only the oral narrative handed down by tradition from the original Missionaries, but, if possible, memoirs committed to writing by persons of authority. He might not be able to reconcile all diversities or to combine the four Memoirs into one compact story, but it was a matter of life and death to him that he should be fully persuaded. He had adversaries, often within his family or neighbourhood, and bitter persecution was always imminent.

When he had these four Books he felt that he was on safe historical ground. He had the testimony of three eyewitnesses—Matthew, Peter (i.e. Mark) and John—and of one man who, though not an eyewitness, was an accurate observer, a student of history, and a companion of the most remarkable of Christian missionaries. These men had been enabled by God's Spirit to throw themselves back into the transition period of the Lord's ministration, to reproduce His table-talk, His public addresses, His mighty works, and to illustrate the strength, purity and loving-kindness of His attitude towards men, and His loving loyalty towards His Father. They all told at length the story of His condemnation and crucifixion, adding the sequel of the resurrection, leaving to other writers and other books what remained to be said. The real source or spring (*Quelle*) [1] of all the Memoirs was Christ Himself. He was love incarnate, the true superphysical manifestation, Whose outlook was not circumscribed by the limitations of His age and nation. He was a Gleam of light from heaven, a hand let down by the Most High, inspiring men to seek and trust the Father

[1] The initial of this German word is sometimes used for an imaginary early *writer*, but I take it here to stand for the original, CHRIST HIMSELF.

and to come and rest on Him as the Rock of Ages. Those who sought God found Him in Christ, in the Jesus of the Gospels, in the Jesus Christ of the Acts and Epistles. The Spirit of Truth quickened the memory and the insight of these Four Witnesses, giving them grace to stand back, so that the Lord might come to the front and stand alone as the one central Figure in history.

The extraordinary thing about the manifestation of Christ is that it was compressed into such a short historical period. Three or four years of word and work—and of those only the briefest selection recorded—seems but a little hinge on which the destiny of the world should turn.

The Son of Man is baptized, subjected to special temptation, goes North to Galilee (Nazareth, Capernaum, etc.), South to Jerusalem, and makes disciples in Judea. This was apparently in A.D. 27 (*see* John ii. 20). He returns North again *viâ* Samaria, and goes through all Galilee, which contained some 240 towns and villages, teaching in the Synagogues, on the hillside, and on the lake-side, lives in public surrounded by crowds, making Capernaum His headquarters, going occasionally to Jerusalem either by the way of the Samaritans or by the

Peræan way. The crowds increase, but opposition increases also. He makes flying visits to Gerasa in the East, to Tyre and Sidon in the North-West, and to Cæsarea Philippi in the North. His work in Galilee is now finished, and He wends His way South *viâ* Jericho and Bethany and Ephraim (John xi. 54).

All this is briefly surveyed, and may involve two, three or four years, whilst the remaining sections in all the Gospels cover a few days, including the narrative which leads up to the crucifixion, and a slight glimpse of the post-resurrection life. Yet, if all the things which the Lord said and did were written down, the world could not have contained the books which would be written. Perhaps this would have led to bewilderment, but what we possess leads to the Light.

§ 5. Testimony of Polycarp and Irenæus

In order to illustrate the spirit of the early Communities and their relation to the age of the Lord and His original followers, let us look into the Letter of Polycarp, who was in charge of the Community of Smyrna early in the second century. "Two long lives (says Dr. Lightfoot [1]) —those of St. John and of Polycarp—span the

[1] In his essays on *Supernatural Religion*.

period which elapsed between the personal ministry of our Lord and the great Christian teachers living at the close of the second century. Polycarp was the disciple of St. John, and Irenæus was the disciple of Polycarp." Probably A.D. 70 was the date of Polycarp's birth, and he died in or about A.D. 155. From childhood he had been a Christian, and he was about thirty at the time of St. John's death (*c.* A.D. 100). Some years later he wrote this letter to the Philippian Community. "Its most important feature is the profuseness of quotation from the apostolic writings, to which we find between thirty and forty references in this short letter, including passages from the Gospels, the Acts and the Epistles, all Paul's letters, except Colossians and Philemon, being referred to." A sample of his welding together of texts may be given :—

"If we entreat the Lord that He would forgive us, we ought also to forgive ; for we are before the eyes of our Lord and God, and we must all stand at the judgment-seat of Christ, and each man must give an account of himself. Let us therefore so serve Him with fear and all reverence, as He Himself gave commandment, and the apostles who preached the Gospel to us, and the prophets who proclaimed beforehand

the coming of our Lord. . . . Wherefore, let us forsake the vain doing of the many, and their false teachings, and turn unto the word which was delivered unto us from the beginning, being sober unto prayer and constant in fastings, entreating the all-seeing God with supplication, that He bring us not into temptation, according as the Lord said, The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." Again: "I am persuaded that ye are well trained in the sacred writings, and nothing is hidden from you. But to myself this is not granted. Only as it is said in these Scriptures, Be ye angry and sin not, and let not the sun go down upon your wrath. . . . Now may the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Eternal High Priest Himself, the [Son of] God, Jesus Christ, build you up in faith and truth." This might be an extract from a twentieth century discourse!

Irenæus was probably born about A.D. 120. He was a pupil of Polycarp and succeeded the ancient Pothinus in the charge of the Church of Lyons in about A.D. 178. He was both mentally and physically an active man, a teacher and controversialist. He appeals to almost all the documents which make up our New Testament and regards them as the highest authorities. His Creed is our Creed (i. 10). His view of the

Church as one orthodox missionary body dependent on apostolic writings is ours (iii. 4, 12, 25). His Four Gospels are ours (iii. 1). They rest on the Theology of the Old Testament, and (as he says) the very heretics bear witness to them —the Ebionites to Matthew, the Marcionites to Luke, those who distinguish Jesus from Christ to Mark, and the Valentinians to John (iii. 11). His Bible is made up of the Law and the Prophets, the Evangelists and the Apostles (i. 3), which are to him the oracles of God (i. 8). The fact that the Scripture was misused by heretics only made him a more diligent student. The doctrine of "the Word," which he had drawn from the writings of "John, the disciple of the Lord" (ii. 2), is carefully expounded by him and is compared with the teaching of Paul the Apostle (iii. 18); and he points out that the Jews failed to believe in Christ through neglect of this great truth (iv. 7).

Let any one absorb the writings of Irenæus and his contemporaries, as can easily be done in the pages of *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* (T. & T. Clark), and he will find himself back in the closing years of the Second Century, amidst a Christianity which rings true to Christ and to the Apostles, though surrounded with persecu-

tion, false teaching and superstition. Certainly, it was a Missionary religion giving rise to a philanthropic life in those days, and all the ends of the Roman earth were tasting the salvation of God.

There is a little page of history which has floated down through the ages from the time of Irenæus to the present day; it is called *The Acts of the Scillitan Martyrs*, and has been edited, from a newly-discovered MS., by Dr. J. Armitage Robinson.[1] He tells us of a little company of six Christians standing on their defence before Saturninus, Proconsul of Carthage, between 180 and 200 A.D. The chief speaker is Speratus. He cannot yield to any authority which runs contrary to the will of God, "Whom no man hath seen or can see." He and his fellow-Christians are questioned and re-questioned in vain. Observing that they carried with them a bag (*capsa*), the Proconsul inquires what its contents are, and they answer, "Our Books and the Letters of Paul, a righteous man." These Books contained their belief and ministered to their daily spiritual life. On the strength of them one and all declared, "I am a Christian." One and all were sentenced to be

[1] *Texts and Studies*, I. 2. Cambridge.

slain with the sword, and, as the brief narrative affirms, "they thanked God and were crowned with martyrdom, and they reign with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit for ever."

This simple narrative gives us an insight into the beliefs of Christians about a century after the death of the original Pioneers of Christianity.

VII

PROGRESSION BY ANTAGONISM

§ 1. Early Criticisms and Persecutions

WHEN we survey the beginning of the Gospel as it is gathered up in Christ and enforced under the guidance of His spirit, we can hardly help asking how it is that Christianity (i.e. the reign of righteousness) has been so slow to make its way through the world. Was there something wrong at the beginning? Did the fault lie with the Pioneers of the Kingdom? or is it that those who succeeded them failed to live and teach in the spirit of their predecessors?

While the Lord Jesus lived, and taught, and wrought, He encountered suspicion, criticism and opposition at every turn, not indeed from the common people, but from their leaders and from the clergy of that day. His exposition of the Law of Moses was wholly different from theirs. He originated a new school of thought and interpretation. His aim in life was spiritual rather than political; it was not a resuscitation

of the Davidic Kingdoms, but a reign of right. Moreover, He was apparently a Galilean, a Nazarene. How, then, could He be called the Son of David? Many of His sayings were hard. His teaching about the Sabbath gave dire offence. He exposed the hollowness of Pharisaism. Even some of His own followers were repelled by His startling utterances about His flesh and blood. He sketched the future of Jerusalem in gloomy colours, and as for Himself, He was to be rejected and to die, and yet to come and reign in glory.

All this was fresh in the minds of the people when the Pioneers began to preach on the day of Pentecost. In spite of the marvellous manifestations of that day, criticism began at once. First it was jeering and mockery, then passive resistance, then active persecution fostered by false witness and misrepresentation: Stephen is stoned; James is beheaded; Paul is nearly torn in two; there is an atmosphere of persecution for Christ's sake and for righteousness' sake through all the Letters. The spirit of Patriotism is invoked against the new Teachers; so is Imperialism; for they turn the world upside down and proclaim another King, one Jesus.

In spite of all, "the Word of God," i.e. its practical and moral effects, grew and multiplied.

By the end of the second century the whole Roman Empire was permeated by the Gospel. The stiff-necked Jew, the stalwart Roman, the subtle Greek, the uncultured barbarian, the stoic, the epicurean, the mystic, the materialist —some of all these classes had yielded to the call of the King of Righteousness.

As one studies the Acts and the Letters, it is easy to see that the chief antagonists to the Gospel were the spirit of the world and the spirit of error. The flesh was strong, whether in Jew or in Gentile. There were false Christs, false teachers, false apostles, false brethren, false prophets, false witnesses. Satan was disguised as an angel of light. Tares were sown by subtle enemies. Many deceivers were abroad. Party-spirit slew its thousands, and pleasure-loving its ten thousands.

This gives us a sense of disappointment. Why did not the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ intervene more strongly in behalf of the Community founded by His Son? A little more vital force, a little more intervention, a little more clearness where we seem to have ambiguity, and progress would have been more rapid and complete.[1]

[1] See Bishop Lightfoot's *Comparative Progress of Ancient and Modern Missions*, published by the S.P.G.

Gibbon, in the ninth chapter of his *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, discusses the matter as an outsider. He observes that, notwithstanding the purity of the Christian religion, it was violently opposed by emperors who viewed with indifference many other beliefs. This he thinks was owing to the proselytizing ardour of Christians; their assemblies were misunderstood; their characters were calumniated; they were regarded as atheists because they were not idolaters. At length came the Edict of Diocletian (Feb. 24, A.D. 303), under which all churches were to be destroyed, all sacred Books burnt, and the whole body of Christians outlawed. Finally, he determined to abolish the Christian name altogether. Ten years afterwards Constantine issued the Edict of Milan, which restored to Christians all their rights. This is a sample of the ups and downs of Christian history. It might be illustrated in more modern times from the story of Madagascar or of China; and there is an ebb and flow of error and truth going on in Africa under our eyes.

§ 2. Modern Missions Compared with Ancient

We pass across the centuries from A.D. 313

to A.D. 1913. What have these 1600 years done for the cause of Christ? Are things better, or are they worse? Has Christianity advanced or retreated?

Progress, it must be acknowledged, was exceedingly slow for 1,000 years. We see the sudden and astonishing rise of Islam in the East and of Roman Imperialism under a Christian garb in the West; but neither of these can claim to have developed the reign of righteousness. We pass on to the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and find ourselves in the days of the Revival of learning and of the *renaissance* of spiritual Christianity. Then we reach the extraordinary developments of the nineteenth century, the age of Protestant Missions and of Bible translation and circulation. The Gospel is seen in full activity. It sets itself against all the evils by which the human race has been degraded—slavery, oppression, over-crowding, neglect of women and children, ill-treatment of the prisoner and of the insane. Every phase of iniquity and trouble is seriously considered and dealt with—at least, in England. Philanthropic and missionary efforts are Legion. There are Leagues, Societies, working parties, prayer-meetings, study-bands, prayer-cycles, unions, Bible-readings, guilds, reaching out in all direc-

tions and seeking the Divine blessing on every truly unselfish and Christian effort. Alongside of these, but in open or secret antagonism, are the movements of the spirit of the world, advancing under the cloak of civilization. We need not specify them.

We English sometimes classify missions as Home and Foreign ; sometimes as mission to Jews, to Heathen, to Mohammedans, and to our own colonists. They are all conducted for one object—the spiritual welfare of man.

Looking at our Home Missions, no class seems to be left unnoticed. We find Christian workers engaged among our soldiers, our sailors, our police, our telegraph boys, our hooligans, our waifs and strays ; and among widows, orphans, cripples, blind, deaf and dumb, prisoners, fallen men and women, homeless, sick and dying.

They are reached by house-to-house visitation, by city missionaries and Bible-women, by open-air preachers, by young men's and young women's Christian Associations, by nurses' Guilds, by scripture readers and colporteurs, by educationists, by Homes and Hostels. But all this means deep interest, hard work, patient thought, quiet sympathy, constant prayer. It is Christianity in action, and that, in spite of

many differences, social, political, and intellectual, among the workers.

By these and other agencies, myriads of men, women and children have been rescued from wretchedness and hopelessness; instead of being a terror to their neighbourhood, they have become a blessing. The evil spirit is cast out of them. If you ask them what is the cause of this extraordinary change in their hearts and homes, they will point upwards to the Lord Jesus, Who died for them. It may be through a verse of the New Testament, or through the urgency of a colporteur, or through the practical friendliness of a city missionary, but at last you find yourself driven back to the Mission of Jesus Christ.

If we compare these spiritual fruits of the Gospel with those which we understand to have been brought forth in the days of the original Christian Home-workers in Palestine, we have no reason to be discouraged. They initiated on a small scale the class of work which we are now carrying out on a large one. Each Community was expected to shine for Christ in the best sense. Its members were not only to cast away the works of darkness but to put on the armour of light; not only to stop stealing and lying and impurity, but to tell the truth, to

give to him that needs, to follow after holiness, and to bring every thought into captivity to the Master.

Athenagoras, the Athenian philosopher, who was won over to Christianity while reading the Scriptures in order to controvert them, says: "Among us you will find uneducated persons, and artisans, and old women, who, if they are unable in words to prove the benefit of our doctrine, yet by their deeds exhibit the benefit arising from their persuasion of its truth. They do not rehearse speeches, but exhibit good works; when struck, they do not strike again; when robbed, they do not go to law; they give to those that ask of them, and love their neighbours as themselves." This was written in his *Plea for Christians*, about a century after the fall of Jerusalem. Similar passages may be found in other early writings. It illustrates what Justin Martyr calls "the power of the Word"; and the Word has the same power over the human heart to-day.

Let us now look into the foreign mission field, and, in order to restrict our view, take a large map of the world and mark in it the regions in which Protestant missionaries are now at work. There is no one organization attempting to evangelize the whole world. The nearest

approach to this is the work of the British and Foreign Bible Society, which is the handmaid of all other agencies, home and foreign, encouraging them in the work of Bible translation, and printing the results, and aiding in their circulation. This year's *Report* registers 450 languages of which ten—spoken by Hill Tribes and remote Islanders—were new in 1912.[1]

We will confine ourselves to the work of one organization, for the purpose of comparing its labours with that of the early centuries.

Let us take the past year's *Report* (1913) of the Church Missionary Society as a sample of the difficulties and the results which attend modern missions.

In the first three centuries missionary work was mainly, if not wholly, carried on beneath the shadow of Imperial Rome, though by no means under its patronage and protection. There were Roman laws, Roman roads, Roman postal communication, Roman military and civil organization. The Empire was 3,000 miles from East to West and 2,000 from North to South, the Mediterranean being its great water-way. The great centres of Christian evangelistic and literary effort were Italy,

[1] The circulation of 1912 was between seven and eight million Bibles, Testaments, or Portions.

Greece, Macedonia, Proconsular Asia, other parts of Asia Minor, Syria, Palestine, Alexandria, Libya, and Proconsular Africa (Carthage, etc.), with some outlying missions to the North (in Illyricum, Thrace, etc.). These countries were practically under one Government, and were capable of speaking Latin or Greek as well as their own dialects. We get a vivid idea of the difficulties attending Paul's missionary labours in the second Letter to the Corinthians. He had to deal with rough roads, robbers, fever-stricken regions, semi-starvation, and, above all, Jewish opposition. Speaking generally, wherever the early missionary went, there were Jews. This fact was primarily a great advantage, but ultimately it became a ground of violent controversy and bigoted opposition. Christians were in agreement with Jews on many subjects but where they diverged they were regarded with intense animosity, and thus found themselves between two fires, the Jewish and the heathen. The modern Christian missionary often finds himself among a people with which he has no religious contact. At times there seems to be no name for God or for the spiritual life, such names as are to be found often suggesting the most degraded notions. It takes years to undo the mischief of the past and to be sure

that there is a common spiritual ground between the missionary and the people to whom he speaks. This might readily be illustrated from the labours of Robert Moffat among the Bechuana people of S. Africa, or from Eliot's work among the Indians of N. America.

§ 3. A Year of Church Missionary Work

In the *Report* referred to we find Missions in Sierra Leone, the Yoruba country, Nigeria, British East Africa, German East Africa, Uganda and the adjacent Provinces, Egypt and the Sudan, Palestine, Turkish Arabia, Persia, the Punjab and N.W. India, Western India, the United Provinces, the Central Provinces, Bengal, Southern India, Travancore, Ceylon, Mauritius, various regions in the enormous Empire of China, and others in Japan; then we move across to the icy and scantily-populated regions of N.W. Canada, and to British Columbia.

What does this bare enumeration imply and signify? Who shall venture to expound it? It includes 5,000 stations and out-stations, 11,000 missionaries, pastors and teachers, 116,000 native communicants, 14,000 adults and the same number of children baptized last year. These are some of the outward results of one year's ministrations by one Society, consisting

of members of one Community, amidst many nations, languages, climates, modes of travel, intellectual and moral variations, and degrees of keen receptivity, from stolid indifference to active opposition. These missions are by no means in any sense all under the British flag. Our Government is chary in offering anything more than bare protection of life and property where missions are concerned, and in some of the regions referred to the workers carry their lives in their hands.

A large part of the work is Evangelistic in the old sense of the word. The good news of the love of God in Christ is sown far and wide as soon as language difficulties and climate and political obstacles are overcome. Then comes work amongst the women and children, and afterwards the building up of native communities with native pastors and teachers, and with various grades of educational Institutions. Of these last there are over 3,000 at work, and last year's total of students and scholars exceeded 220,000, exclusive of Sunday Schools. To this we have to add the work of Medical Missions, with their doctors, nurses and hospitals. It is hard to speak with self-restraint about this magnificent department of missionary work, the self-sacrifice which it involves, and the results

it has attained. Civilization is sometimes talked about in an easy way, as if it might be regarded as a substitute for Christian effort, but it is by no means an unmixed good. Christian life and Christian teaching are the main means which God uses for the spread of His Kingdom.

§ 4. Reasons for Failures

It is clear that, by the ways just enumerated, the work is steadily advancing amidst the antagonism of Islam, idolatrous superstition, plagues, caste, false teaching, polygamy and other social evils. On the other hand, a consideration of the whole facts of the case leads us to the conclusion that the results of Christ's Mission, though very great, are by no means all that might have been expected; and we are driven back to the Original Documents to find out where the defect lies. Was it in the work of the Lord? in His teaching? In the outflow of His Spirit? In the Divine permission of the spirit of evil and false teaching and persecution? In the failure of Christians to use all the power put at their disposal? In their too easy acceptance of the erroneous idea that all work was to be done *for* Christians and nothing *by* them, or that faith was a substitute for works?

Turning once more to the Lord's teaching, we

are confronted by the Parable of the Sower. It tells us that only a fraction of Christian work can be expected to be successful; and that worldliness and persecution will constantly reduce the effective strength of the Christian Community. Christ never anticipated the universal sovereignty of righteousness during the present order of things; though certainly Faith and Prayer and Labour and Love and Watchfulness might be increased, our convictions might be deepened, our message simplified, our methods improved and adapted, yet, after all, there is an enemy to be reckoned with, whom the Lord calls by the old Hebrew word, Satan—the Adversary—and who is named in almost every book of the New Testament, and whose works Christ came to undo.

§ 5. The Programme Incomplete

But on further examination of our Documents, we find that the Christian Programme is by no means complete. If Faith in the Lord Jesus is the root, and a life of self-renouncing Love is the fruit, a large part of the Mission of Christ is a matter of Hope. "We are saved by Hope." Consequently, the evidence concerning the Mission of Christ is at present incomplete. We have the preparation for His coming in the

Hebrew Scriptures, and we have His teaching, His work, His character, His sacrifice for sin, His resurrection and ascension, and the outflow of His Spirit in the Evangelists and Apostles. We survey these all together, and in the light of them we read modern Christian progress. We see that the Gospel is a more powerful stimulus than the Law, that Christ, though unseen, is through His Spirit ever-present; while described as sitting at God's right hand, He is also standing, walking, waiting, controlling, sympathizing, advocating—no word, in fact, is left out which could set forth His intimate and glorious relationship with those who have cast in their lot with Him. Prayer and praise rise through Him, and the interventions which are God's answers to prayer come down through Him. His Spirit is God's Spirit, and is "Christ in us." The Christian "puts on" the Lord Jesus Christ daily as his armour and clothing.

The Pentecostal blessing is sent forth from the ascended Saviour, Who thus presents God's Truth concerning Himself in a new and inspiring light. The special gifts or *charismata* are not only the earnest of the Christian's inheritance, but signs of Christ's Kingship. He is not only an interested spectator, but an active

administrator, a Prince, a Leader, a Shepherd, a Priest, a "Bishop," a Builder.

But—"we see not yet all things put under Him." His Return has always been anticipated. It is not only to be a time of rejoicing to Himself, when He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied, but it will mean a great deal for the individual Christian, for Israel, and for the world. He gives us in some parts of His teaching a slight prophetic outline of the future, and each age has sought to know how far down the programme we have got. To solve this question we should have to study the Apocalypse; but for the present purpose it is enough to affirm that the world and its inhabitants have a great prospect before them, and that it is summed up in such expressions as "a new heaven and a new earth," "righteous judgment," "an unending Kingdom." When this time comes, all our estimates concerning the dealings of God will be revised.

§ 6. The Future of the Race

The great—one might almost say—appalling thought, when we study this department of our subject, is the teaching concerning the

continued existence of the departed, their resurrection, and the dependence of their future on their earthly course. Can it be that the millions and millions of men, women, and even children of a day old, of every stage of intelligence, of goodness and of badness and of opportunity, are to be weighed in the Divine balance? We can only express our thankfulness that it *is* to be a *Divine* balance, and that the Divine Being is to be represented by the Son of Man (John v. 27; Acts xvii. 31). He will not break the bruised reed nor quench the smoking flax, until He hath put forth judgment unto victory. The people of Sodom and Gomorrah, of Tyre and Sidon, of Nineveh, and the people who were disobedient in the days of Noah, will be dealt with in the spirit of absolute equity. With this, the most sensitive student may rest satisfied, and he need not stagger through unbelief. We accept the testimony of Christ as sure, though our minds are not capable of understanding it; and we will not let the perplexities of the future block the way of progress in the present. There *is* a Future, and Christ, Whom we know by history and experience, is answerable for it. On this subject, as Tertullian says, "I appeal to the Gospels." God is represented in the Bible as the Ruler of

what is good and the Overruler of what is evil, and with that we must be content.

§ 7. The True Test of the Mission of Christ

The appeal to the incompleteness of the Present and to our incapacity to see the whole, is frequently regarded with dissatisfaction. Men say it is no use to invite us to believe when there is so much uncertainty about the future; we need a present demonstration. This seems fair; but have we not a present demonstration? Christ has always offered to submit His claims and His offers to full inquiry. "Come and see," was His watchword from the beginning. All truth, all discovery, all invention must be tested; and the nature of the test must depend on the kind of thing which invites our approval. There are chemical tests and mechanical tests, but we should not submit a spiritual religion to them. The tests to which Christ submitted nineteen centuries ago are not altogether the same as those to which He submits now. When the question was raised as to His power to forgive sins, it was settled by His ordering the sick man to get up and walk. Every one present could see with their own eyes if the man did walk; but we only have the record, which is a

very different thing. The whole ministry of Christ, His words, deeds, resurrection and ascension were more impressive realities to the men then living in His company than they are to this generation. Blot out four years of Christ's ministry, and the origin of Christianity would be lost in obscurity.

Meantime, evil seems to have been growing. Civilized heathenism is respectable barbarism. Music, art, philosophy, science, sanitation, steam, electricity, anæsthetics, aseptics, radio-activity, aviation, wireless telegraphy and other marvels of to-day—we wonder at them, we use them, we honour the men and women to whose acuteness and patience we owe them, but they hardly touch the spring of life; they do not strengthen a weak will, they do not give a new heart to a drunkard, a wife-beater, a gambler, a seducer. "If only these people could have been brought to Jesus," we say, "things would be different"; preventable evils would have been prevented." Christ's knowledge and power and compassion enabled Him to do exactly what was needed in every individual case. If then, why not now?

Again, our outlook on the world is very much larger than it used to be. The daily paper brings us every morning in touch with the lead-

ing races of mankind, with wars, plagues, earthquakes, fires, murders, and such-like. At times one is inclined to say, Where is God? Does He see, permit, approve? or does every throb of pain and sorrow grieve His heart? We feel sure in our better moments that this last suggestion is the true one, and that for the evils which we deplore there is a remedy. The business of life is to find this remedy and use it.

The truth is, that while Secondary Christianity deals with the world at large, using all the resources of civilization in order to better human conditions, Primary Christianity deals with the individual, and puts new life into him.

Some working men lately said of two or three open-air preachers, "These fellows talk as if they knew the Lord Himself and they make no allowance for the advanced thought of the twentieth century." [1] This witness is true.

The real test of the Mission of Christ is the Christ-like life of those who believe in Him. Love is the very breath of the Christian soul. It shows itself in the heart, in the home, and in the workshop. It is as real and effective now as it was during the First Century. The Gospel may be compared with Radium—constant in itself and never failing in the emanations which

[1] *Quarterly Record of the Open-Air Mission*, Oct., 1913.

it gives forth. Its fruit tastes the same as ever. The fountain continues to flow. The manna still comes down from heaven. The Word lives and abides for ever.

The man who has Christ has everything. He is sure of Christ's triumph, and also of his own share in it, though perhaps he does not talk or think much about this last. He is busily occupied in trying to better the world by first infusing a Christ-like spirit into his own thoughts and words, and then into his activities. Though he knows it not, he is following Aristotle's advice at the beginning of his Ethics, and aims, not at knowledge, but at action ; and he sows in hope. When perplexities come he reminds himself that, as in the past, so in the future—

> " God is His own interpreter,
> And He will make it plain."

VIII

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES ON THE AGE AND AUTHORSHIP OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

§ 1. Early Texts

IT is natural that doubts and controversies should have arisen with respect to the age and accuracy of the MSS. which are the title-deeds of the Faith. The present writer had good reason to look into the question some years ago, and he hopes that the following notes will be helpful.

Dr. Sanday, in his *Gospels in the Second Century* (p. 328), states that "the Gospels as used by the Christian writers at the end of the first century, so far from being of recent composition, had already a long history behind them. At that date they exhibit a text which bears the marks of frequent transcription and advanced corruption." [1] Origen was the great-

[1] The word "corruption," when used in this connexion, simply means decay or disintegration, and has nothing to do with deliberate perversion or dishonesty.

est among critics and expositors in the Early Church, and was perpetually discussing "various readings." Irenæus, who was still earlier, discusses two texts already in existence for "the number of the beast" (Rev. xiii. 18), viz. 616 and 666. He felt sure that the latter was the true reading, as "he found it in the best and oldest copies, and that it was attested by those who had seen John face to face." Again, in Matthew i. 18, all our old MSS. read, "Now the birth of Jesus Christ," etc., but the Vatican MS. reads, "of Christ Jesus," while the old Latin and Syrian Versions read, "of Christ." Irenæus in quoting it says, "Matthew could have said 'of Jesus,' but the Holy Spirit, foreseeing the depravers, says through Matthew, 'of Christ.'" In discussing Tertullian's writings, Dr. Sanday gives the following account of the stratification of MSS. up to his date. First, there were the sacred Autographs, which were copied for some time without material change. Gradually a few errors slipped in, especially in the Egyptian Versions and in the works of some Alexandrian and Palestinian Fathers. In time a wider breach was made. We reach at last that strange document which became the parent of the Curetonian Syriac on the one hand and of the old Latin on the other. Then the old Latin

divides, and one of its copies (*b*) seems to represent a text which has a close affinity to that of Tertullian. All this involves a century. He adds, that if the whole of the Christian literature for the first three quarters of the second century could be blotted out, and Irenæus and Tertullian alone remained, as well as the later MSS. with which to compare them, there would still be ample proof that the latest of our Gospels cannot overstep the bounds of the first century. Moreover, he agrees with that careful student, Dr. Scrivener, that the worst corruptions to which the New Testament has ever been subjected originated within a hundred years after it was composed.

With regard to later copies, some were taken from very ancient MSS. and others were derived through a long series, and have suffered accordingly.

The exact student has to face the fact of differences of texts, to divide them into families, to see how far they affect important passages and doctrines, and to account for their existence at all. If he is also an Old Testament student, he will have met with the same difficulty in discussing the Hebrew text.

One thing is clear: the more often a work is copied by hand, the more liable it is to corrup-

tion. There is a tendency to mistake one letter for another very like it, to misread a contraction or abbreviation, to substitute a more familiar word or spelling for a less familiar one. Some 99 out of every 100 variations might come under these heads. The writer trusts to his eye, or to his ear if listening to a reader, or to his memory if he thinks some words have been accidentally dropped or altered; or there may have been a momentary lapse of attention, notwithstanding habits of care and accuracy. Beyond these, there is a residuum of important changes. It has been thought that authors may sometimes have issued varying copies of the same work, but this is not likely in the case of the New Testament. Omissions seem more easy to be accounted for than additions; a last leaf may be missing; the eye may run on from one word to a similar one a little further on; a passage may be omitted for public reading in a "lectionary," and yet may be part of the original text. On the other hand, a foreign word may be explained, or a paraphrastic rendering inserted. We should be slow to believe in anything in the way of deliberate alteration, omission or interpolation, but undoubtedly erroneous teaching sought to support itself at times by tampering with the sacred Docu-

ments. St. Paul provided against forgeries, though he knew that there were risks (2 Thess. ii. 2; iii. 17), and Augustine points out that the corrupter of a MS. would speedily be confuted by the number of other correct MSS. which would rise up against him. Dr. Sanday says that the theory of an interpolation is easily advanced, and it is drawn so entirely from our ignorance that it can seldom be positively disproved. The *onus probandi*, however, lies on him who suggests it. He must show (*a*) that the earliest MSS. do not contain the passage in question; (*b*) that the context was quoted by early writers without it; (*c*) that it differs in style from the rest of the book; (*d*) that it contains inconsistencies or anachronisms; (*e*) that the passage has been introduced clumsily; (*f*) that an object for its insertion can be detected. After all, if there should be a proved interpolation it by no means affects the integrity of the original writer.

With regard to certain insertions in the Gospels, they are owing to the fact that some Evangelists give a passage more fully than others, and that copyists, remembering the more complete sentence, were led to add some words to the less complete. After all, the reader of the Gospel wanted to know what our

Lord actually said and did, and he would not be shocked by this class of insertion. It should be added that the public reading of these sacred Books must have had a very conservative effect. The text as read would be remembered, for hearers had good memories in those days. And yet, in spite of this, Origen, in a note on St. Matthew, says: "Great has become the diversity of copies, whether from the negligence of certain scribes or from the evil daring of some who correct what is written, or from those who, in correcting, add or take away when they think fit." At any rate, not one in a thousand is material.

It is pleasant to get away from these perplexities to another side of the subject.

The oldest complete Virgil is of the fourth century, the oldest Homer of the fifth, the oldest Livy of the sixth, the oldest Plato of the eighth, the oldest Euclid of the ninth, the oldest Sophocles of the tenth, the oldest Thucydides of the eleventh. How do the MSS. of the Gospels rank as compared with these? They rank with the highest, i.e. with Virgil.

Of Herodotus there are about 15 MSS.; of the Books of the New Testament at least 2,000. They were speedily scattered all over the Roman world and the possession of them gave a great

stimulus to the pursuit of reading and writing. Mr. Norton, in his work on the Gospels, reckons that 60,000 copies were in circulation by the end of the second century. But not one of these has come down to us. Such persecutors as Diocletian felt that if he would uproot Christianity he must destroy the Christian Books. The marvel is that any remained. The age of Constantine witnessed a great revival in the production of copies of Scripture. There is a letter extant from the Emperor to Eusebius, preserved in this writer's life of Constantine (iv. 36), and also given in the history by Socrates (i. 9), in which he says that, owing to the great influx of persons into the Christian community, there is need of more churches, and he orders "to be transcribed on well-prepared parchment, by competent writers, fifty copies of the Sacred Scriptures as quickly as possible, being needful for the instruction of the Church." They were to be "of portable size." Do any of these still exist? Our three most notable manuscripts must have come down from that age. The Alexandrine is a Greek Bible in Quarto, in two columns, on seventy-seven leaves, portions of St. Matthew and St. John being lost. The Vatican is in three columns on 759 leaves on skins of antelopes. It is an abbre-

viated text with many mistakes, and no less than 2,555 words are missing. The Sinaitic (the romantic discovery of which is described by Dr. Tischendorf) is on 730 leaves. It is written by four hands, one of which is believed to have written the Vatican MS. It has had many corrections by divers hands. It was discovered on Mount Sinai on February 4, 1859. Three years afterwards a Greek named Simonides declared that he had written it all himself in some ten months (which would imply 20,000 separate uncial or capital letters a day !). This cool statement led to a re-examination of the MS., its material, ink, spellings and other peculiarities ; and its exceeding antiquity was thus determined.

The conclusion to which we are led is, that the Title-deeds of the Christian Church have come down from the century in which they were originally written, having marvellously escaped destruction, none of our copies being absolutely free from mistakes such as all MSS. are liable to, and that, owing to their number or condition, it is possible to get a fair insight into the original text, all the more so as they have been translated in early days and have been quoted largely by many ancient Christian writers ; also, that while there may have been omissions or addi-

tions in quite early copies, there are no marks of systematic tampering with the text in any MSS. that have come down to us, the imperfect and unworthy copies having perished.

§ 2. Early Quotations

Let us assume that we have access to no earlier MSS. than those which date from *c.* A.D. 325, when great doctrines were discussed in the light and by the authority of far more ancient MSS. In order to get back to the originals, which had been copied and re-copied (and in consequence slightly varied), down to that time we have to cross a period of above two centuries. We know from non-Christian sources that Christians were in existence ; but were the Christian *Books* in existence ? Creeds were already current ; churches were already standing ; Catacombs contained hundreds of thousands of the Christian dead ; there had been thousands of martyrs, including Flavius Clemens, the cousin of the Emperor Domitian ; pictorial symbols of the Christian faith were widely used ; there were also writers. Jerome, one of the most learned of them, gives 135 biographies of notable men, and Eusebius, who lived at the date above referred to, mentions seventy persons who had written Christian

works before his time. Most of their works are lost, but what remain take us back step by step into the age of the last of the Apostles, and by their means we may climb up as by a chronological ladder into the First Century.

Starting back from the African writers, Arnobius and Lactantius (300), both converts from heathenism and both intelligent defenders of Christian truth, using freely the books of the New Testament for their purpose, we get back to Cyprian, an African convert in middle life, who became Bishop of Carthage *c.* A.D. 250. We find in his writings some 500 quotations from the Gospels alone. A few years earlier we reach the notable scholar and critic, Origen, who was born of Christian parents at Alexandria, *c.* A.D. 185. He sold his classical MSS. for an annuity of sixpence a day, and settled in Palestine in A.D. 215, and commented freely on the Scriptures. Stepping back to A.D. 200, we find ourselves in the company of Tertullian of Carthage, Clement of Alexandria, Hippolytus of Rome, and Julius Africanus, the chronologer, who freely discussed the dates in Daniel and the two genealogies of our Lord. A quarter of a century earlier we associate with Irenæus of Lyons, who was born about the time St. John died, Athenagoras (who testifies to Christ as

the Word), Theophilus of Antioch (who wrote a Harmony on the Four Gospels), Pantænus (an early missionary to India, who found that Matthew's Gospel had preceded his), Minucius Felix, Taṭian (the author of the Diatessaron), Papias (Bishop of Hierapolis), Claudius Apollinaris, Dionysius (Bishop of Corinth, a defender of the Truth), Melito of Sardis (an acute student), Quadratus, Aristides, Hegesippus (the Church Historian), Heracleon, and the celebrated Justin Martyr, to whom we owe such a full account of early Christianity and such a free use of the Christian Scriptures. We are now in the latter portion of the actual Apostolic age. There is Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, whose short letter to the Philippians contains some forty clear references to the New Testament, Ignatius of Antioch, Hermas, Barnabas, Clement of Rome, and the unknown authors of the Second Epistle of Clement and of the Letter to Diognetus.

We do not do justice to these men by merely naming them. We ought to throw ourselves back into their age and study every word that we have received from them. It is interesting to see how many of these writers appear to be of African origin, and how few were Jewish. Barnabas must have been Jewish,

and his mission seems to have been to interpret the Old Testament in the light of the New. Owing to the fact that his Epistle was included in the great Sinaitic MS., we now have the Greek original of some parts of which we only possessed a Latin version before. In a reference to a passage in St. Matthew, Barnabas had (according to the Latin) introduced it with the words, "it is written"; but a German critic, Credner, refused to accept the words (which of course would imply the pre-existence of St. Matthew's Gospel. But, as Dr. Tischendorf says: "While men were disputing in learned Germany whether the Latin Version was trustworthy, the original Greek text lay hidden among a heap of old parchments in a Greek Convent on Mount Sinai." On examining the passage, the important Greek word translated "it is written," was found.

§ 3. Early Heretics

The antagonism between Truth and Error showed itself in the early days of Christianity, as we can see from the pages of the New Testament. It was partly owing to the attempt to adjust Christian teaching to idolatrous and philosophical systems, and, as time went on, a body

of Truth had to be determined, such as is contained in the Nicene Creed, and was stamped as "Catholic," being held by all recognized Christian Communities, whilst those whose beliefs were divergent were branded as Heretics. These were very numerous, and held all sorts of strange ideas, but it is clear that—speaking generally—they did not reject the Christian Scriptures. Irenæus (*Hær.* iii. 11. 7), says, "So well established are our Gospels, that even teachers of error themselves bear testimony to them and rest their objections on the foundation of the Gospels." Such is the judgment of the last half of the second century on the first half.

If we possessed the writings of these Heretics we should learn much, but we know them chiefly from the answers to them, such as Origen's work against the unbelieving Celsus, in which he deals *seriatim* with the utterances of this notable personage. There was also a treatise on the heretical views current in early times, by Irenæus, who wrote in *c.* A.D. 175. But this was eclipsed by the discovery of another. "Three centuries ago (says Bishop Christopher Wordsworth) a statue was dug up near Rome; it bore no name, but it had a Greek inscription on it containing the titles of an author's works. They were recognized as the writings of Hip-

polytus, and as such the statue was placed in the Papal library." Three hundred years passed, and a MS. was discovered by M. Villemain, on Mount Athos. It had Origen's name on it, and was sent to Oxford to be printed as his in 1852. But scholars determined that it was the long-lost work of Hippolytus, Bishop of Portus Romanus in A.D. 222, whose chair had already been discovered. It is intensely interesting, especially as the writer does not hesitate to brand two Popes (Zephyrinus and Callistus) with heresy, and knows nothing of papal supremacy and infallibility.

In looking over the list of Heretics, about whom we have now learnt much, we find Ptolemæus (170), who used the greater part of the New Testament; Heracleon, who commented on two of the Gospels; Basilides, who taught at Alexandria (A.D. 117–137), and who ranked the Books of the New Testament with those of the Old; Valentinus, who quotes St. Luke, St. John and, apparently, St. Matthew; the writer or writers of the Pseudo-Clementine works; and Marcion, who is reported to have made a Gospel of his own based on St. Luke and in accordance with St. Paul.

From these writings as a whole we obtain, as from an unexpected source, an interesting

testimony to the antiquity of our Christian Scriptures.

§ 4. Authorship and Authority

We have pushed our way back into the Apostolic age, and are driven to the conclusion that the Books which make up our New Testament were read and revered then as they are now. But who wrote them? It is not quite so easy to answer, but students of antiquity are generally agreed that we may accept a general and ancient tradition unless there is any reason to the contrary. Books may be divided into two classes: there are those in which the author names himself at the beginning or in the body of his work, and those which are, strictly speaking, anonymous, though they have a name affixed to them. The Letters chiefly come under the first head, and the Gospels and Acts, under the second. Paul's letters were sent by hand to certain individuals and Communities, and were signed with his own hand, and were generally written to persons who knew him, who accepted his authority as apostolic and inspired, and who would recognize his teaching and style. The Letter to the Hebrews was anonymous, and there has always been a little uncertainty about its authorship. Peter's,

James' and Jude's have their names in them, and the group which bear the name of John on them are evidently the work of the writer of the Fourth Gospel. The Apocalypse was recognized as John's in very ancient days.

The names of the Four Evangelists are prefixed to all MSS. of the Gospels and to all Versions. No alternative names have come down from antiquity. Origen says: "I have understood from tradition respecting the Four Gospels, which are the only undisputed ones in the whole Church of God throughout the world: The first is written according to Matthew, the same that was once a publican but afterwards an apostle of Jesus Christ, who, having published it for the Jewish converts, wrote it in Hebrew; the second is according to Mark, who composed it as Peter explained to him; the third according to Luke, the Gospel commended by Paul, which was written for the converts from the Gentiles; and last of all, the Gospel according to John." Tertullian said the same. Clement of Alexandria does not name Matthew, but refers to Luke as the author of the Acts, and names Mark and John, and refers to John as the author of the larger Epistle. Papias takes us into the Apostolic age, and tells us that Mark was the interpreter of Peter, and that Matthew composed his narrative in Hebrew.

We thus have moral certainty as to the authorship of almost every book of the New Testament, and this is the conclusion to which students have been driven, not only by respect for tradition, but by the force of such evidence as would be considered trustworthy in ordinary literary question. Every Book has been a battle-ground, but especially is this the case with St. John's Gospel, the testimony to which has been examined of late years by Professor Drummond, and before him by Dr. Tregelles, who summed up the matter by saying: "Whosoever casts doubt on St. John's Gospel seeks to render uncertain *now* that on which there was no doubt in the second century.

Authority springs from authorship. The writers were the authorized followers of the Lord and had the mind of Christ. Hence, their utterances were entirely to be trusted and implicitly to be believed. They commended themselves to reason and moral sense, and were in later days affirmed to be the Rule of Faith, because they represented the Apostolic Teaching, and all controversies in the Church had to be decided by their precedents. They were—and are—trustworthy witnesses to Christ and His Truth.

INDEX OF AUTHORS AND SUBJECTS

Acts, 40, etc.
Apocalypse, 29
Aristides' Apology, 8
Arnobius, 10
Authority, 210
Barnabas' letter, 205
Celsus, 14
Christ's life, work, and teaching, 84, etc.
Christ's use of Old Testament, 133
Christ's teaching pre-Christian, 136
Christ's rejection, Death, and Resurrection, 146,
Chronology of the Gospel, 79
Church Missionary Society, 183
Erasmus' N.T., 5
Eusebius, 200
Failure in Missions, 185
Gospels, the Four, 163
Haldane R., and Lord Hailes, 9
Hebrews, Epistle to, 37
Heretics and the N.T., 205
Hippolytus, 206
Irenæus, 169, 195, 203
John Baptist, 81
John's Gospel, 159
Justin Martyr, 7, 14
Kenyon, F. G., 4
Lactantius, 10
Letters of Apostles, 16, etc.
Lucian, 14
Luke, his accuracy, 53
Luke, his Preface, 64
Manuscripts, age of, 5
Marcus Aurelius, 15
Mark's Gospel, 156
Matthew's Gospel, 152
Mission of Christ, how tested, 190
Missions ancient and modern, 176
Origen, 194, 203
Paul, 29, etc., 43, etc.
Pliny, 13
Polycarp, 167
Programme, the Christian, 186
Quotations, 202
Sanday, Dr., 194
Scrivener, Dr., 196
Seneca, 11
Suetonius, 12
Tacitus, 12
Tatian, 10
Taylor, Isaac, 4
Tertullian, 10
Text of N.T., 194
Theophilus of Antioch, 204
Tischendorf, Dr., 201
Translations of Scripture, 6
Writers, ancient, who refer to the N.T., ix
Writing, age of, 2

Printed for ROBERT SCOTT, *Publisher*, PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON, *by* BUTLER & TANNER, FROME.

The Library of Historic Theology

Edited by the Rev. Wm. C. Piercy, M.A.

"The aim of the 'LIBRARY OF HISTORIC THEOLOGY' is to provide a series of handbooks which, while popular in their nature and appeal, will indeed be a boon to a generation that needs nothing more urgently than sure guidance as to 'a general survey of the present position of thought and knowledge in various branches of the wide field which is included in the study of Divinity.'"—*Guardian.*

Full Demy 8vo, Handsome Library Style, **5s.** net each.

THE PRESENT RELATIONS OF SCIENCE AND RELIGION

By the Rev. Professor T. G. BONNEY, D.Sc.

ARCHÆOLOGY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

Was the Old Testament written in Hebrew?

By Professor EDOUARD NAVILLE, D.C.L., LL.D., F.S.A.

MARRIAGE IN CHURCH AND STATE

By the Rev. T. A. LACEY, M.A.

The DEAN OF DURHAM (Dr. HENSLEY HENSON), at the Church Congress, 1913, describes this work as a "**Remarkably able and informing book.**"

"A learned and stimulating book on the gravest of moral questions."—*Church Times.*

MYSTICISM IN CHRISTIANITY

By the Rev. W. K. FLEMING, M.A., B.D.

"Sound and valuable."—*Times.*

"A sound and scholarly survey of the history of mysticism."—*Evening Standard.*

"A welcome and valuable addition to the mass of literature on mysticism and the mystics. Mr. Fleming writes well, and his book should be widely read."—*Guardian.*

THE RULE OF LIFE AND LOVE

By the Rev. R. L. OTTLEY, D.D.

"A book of great value to the parochial clergy. It is a manual of practical morality based on religion. It is just what is needed as an aid to the ordinary preacher, who will find here an excellent stimulus and an abundance of good material which he can shape for himself."—*Guardian.*

THE RULE OF FAITH AND HOPE

By the Rev. R. L. OTTLEY, D.D.

An Exposition of the Apostles' Creed

"It is a refreshing exposition of Christianity as the religion of the better hope, the religion of wonder, of glory, of joy—as not primarily a creed or a philosophy, but a *life* or a 'way.'"—*Commonwealth.*

THE BUILDING UP OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

By the Rev. Canon R. B. GIRDLESTONE, M.A.

"At once the most comprehensive, the most candid, and the most Scriptural account of the Scriptures and their inspiration which has been made by a modern scholar. It ought to be of immense assistance to all who desire to obtain a firm footing amidst the confusions which recent criticism has produced."
The Record.

CHRISTIANITY AND OTHER FAITHS

By the Rev. W. ST. CLAIR TISDALL, D.D.

"A book on a subject of keen interest and great importance, and it may be relied on."—*Expository Times.*

"A wide survey of the religions of the world written by a real expert is most welcome. All Dr. Tisdall has to say is put down with the sure touch of a real student and a great linguist."—*Church Times.*

THE CHURCHES IN BRITAIN. Vols. I. and II.

By the Rev. ALFRED PLUMMER, D.D.

"The work is full of suggestive passages, and is written in an admirably lucid style. . . . No better account of the early history of the Church in Britain could be put into the hands of clergy and students."
Guardian.

MISSIONARY METHODS—ST. PAUL'S OR OURS?

By the Rev. ROLAND ALLEN, M.A., Author of *Missionary Principles.*

"A clear and able statement of the first principles of missionary work embodied in the New Testament; an equally clear and able indictment of the methods and principles of modern missions."—*Commonwealth.*

"Mr. Allen's book is an important introduction to some problems of missionary statesmanship and administration."—*The East and the West.*

THE CHRISTOLOGY OF ST. PAUL.

By the Rev. S. NOWELL ROSTRON, M.A.

"An original and in every way competent investigation into the Christology of St. Paul. . . . Mr. Rostron has read up his subject thoroughly—the literature of the Epistles and the Epistles themselves. In this substantial book we find as easy an introduction to the Pauline doctrine of the Person of Christ as we are likely to find anywhere."—*Expository Times.*

THE CREEDS: Their History, Nature, and Use

By the Rev. HAROLD SMITH, M.A.

"The work is thorough all the way through, the language is simple and clear, and difficulties are always fairly dealt with. For theological students, and for the clergy generally, the book provides an admirable introduction to the Creeds, while teachers will find much that is helpful in it. . . . Will speedily become a recognised handbook."—*Record.*

CHARACTER AND RELIGION.

By the Rev. the Hon. A. LYTTELTON, M.A.

"A book that ought to count. It is full of practical spiritual insight, and never swerves from its centre; while it contains thoughts of great wisdom and depth."—*Athenæum.*

"A scholarly and valuable contribution towards a question about which, without a doubt, there lies a great fight ahead."—*The Universe.*

DATE DUE

BV 2073 .G524 1914

Girdlestone, Robert Baker,
1836-1923.

The mission of Christ and
the title deeds of

UNITED THEOLOGICAL
SEMINARY LIBRARY

United Theological Seminary Library
MAIN BV2073.G524 1914
Girdlestone, The mission of Christ and
3 0645 0005 0359 5